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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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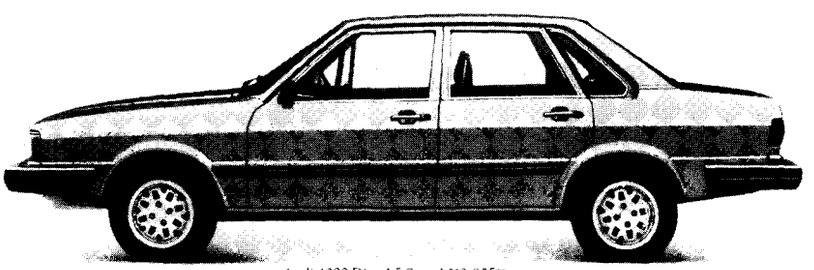

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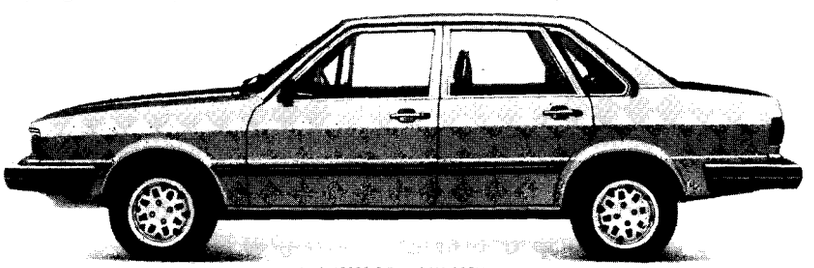

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CORRESPONDENCE

SMEARING DONOVAN

To the editors:

Your recent review of the Donovan affair ("The Donovan Dispensation," TNR, August 2) makes some incredible assertions, which, if carried to their logical extreme, would destroy the foundations of our judicial system.

You state that "to be not guilty is not necessarily to be innocent." Why is it that we cannot accept the findings of a grand jury? The innuendo that you generated in trying to smear Donovan did not convince those who could have brought down an indictment.

Later in the article you say, "Mr. Silverman cannot prove perjury here either. But neither can he disprove most of the charges, and no one—Mr. Donovan included—has proposed an explanation for the sheer number of charges by reliable sources." It's difficult to understand why TNR calls upon someone to offer explanations of innocence. Under our system of law, an individual is required to say nothing. The presumption is, and ought to be, one of innocence. The reliable sources to which you refer are convicted felons. Surely whatever mistakes Mr. Donovan may have made in the past cannot be dragged up now on the basis of guilt by association. We shouldn't send Frank Sinatra to jail because Mafia chieftains enjoy being photographed with him.

It is fair to assert that public figures must abide by a higher standard of integrity than the average citizen; but to suggest that the case should not be considered closed is very unfair to Mr. Donovan, not to mention our system of justice in America. You owe Ray Donovan an apology.

KENT L. BARRY
Chicago, Illinois

The editors reply:

We do not take issue with the grand jury's finding that Mr. Donovan cannot be convicted of a crime, and we do not propose to send the Secretary of Labor to jail. But a man's presumption of innocence for purposes of criminal law can only be stretched so far when applied to the issue of his fitness for public office, particularly when that office is the chief enforcer of corruption-in-labor laws. The grand jury did not claim to judge Mr. Donovan's moral probity, but there is more than enough evidence in the special prosecutor's report—if only a few pundits would read it—for the public to do so. (To repeat only one example, it is manifest from the report that Mr. Donovan's company—of which he owned more than one-third—had close professional and social ties with mob-associated felons.) Nobody suggests sending Frank Sinatra to jail because he has unsavory associates. But you don't make him a cabinet officer, either.

COVERING MCCARTHY

To the editors:

As a *Time* magazine collector, may I correct a minor error in Robert Coles's review of *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy* (TNR, August 2)? The Wisconsin Senator never "graced the cover of *Time* an unprecedented seven times," as Coles says. He graced it only twice—October 22, 1951, and March 8, 1954—and even if it had been seven times it wouldn't have been unprecedented. Truman, Eisenhower, Stalin, and Mussolini, among others, had all appeared at least that many times by 1953.

V. CULLUM ROGERS
Durham, North Carolina

TAXING ADVICE

To the editors:

Tilt. Tilt. Your July 19 & 26 issue carries an article by Bob McIntyre, "Flat-Rate Talk." He attributes to me the outrageous view that "taxes on moderate income people are too low." Wrong. I believe nothing of the sort, as Bob well knows. I suspect him of bearing a grudge because a softball batted by me once struck his wife in the head.

If I had my way, taxes on all groups would fall. That would optimize social income, which in my view ought to be the goal of a sound tax policy.

JAMES D. DAVIDSON
Chairman, National Taxpayers Union
Washington, D.C.

Robert McIntyre replies:

Jim Davidson has indeed sometimes pushed for lower taxes for everyone, consistent with his libertarian view that the size of government should be slashed. But he is currently endorsing a revenue-neutral proposal for a flat 19 percent rate, which would raise taxes by 10 to 20 percent for families earning under $50,000 per year and cut taxes by 25 percent for those with incomes over $100,000 per year.

It is understandable that he prefers to change the subject to softball when the implications of his program are identified, but there's no doubt that a Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax shift is what he is promoting.

WORKING IT OUT

To the editors:

"Hard Times" (TNR, August 9) points up the mismatch of double-digit unemployment and the deteriorating infrastructure of the U.S. Your solution, like any solution, creates a problem, not just jobs. Will the unemployed be allowed to fill those jobs? Will the construction unions be permitted to impose their inflated pay scales and feather-bedded work rules on the program? Will the contractors condone the unions' inflated costs and add those costs to inflated fees? How many do-nothing workers will the politicians add to the pot? Will there be enough construction equipment available to make a significant dent in the unemployment rate?

Providing jobs is one of the answers to our problems—if the politicians, the bureaucrats, the workers, and the employers don't make a great big boondoggle out of it. Jobs should not be handouts under another name.

HARRY TANNENBAUM
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

VOTING RIGHTS RHETORIC

To the editors:

Your succinct analysis of the lukewarm support of the Voting Rights Act extension by the Reagan Administration ("No Thanks on Voting Rights," TNR, July 19 & 26) crystallized an issue of vital interest to those concerned with civil rights. Given the Administration's weak and tardy endorsement of the Voting Rights Act, it is more crucial than ever for civil rights groups to continue to scrutinize critically the Administration's performance—or lack thereof—in enforcing the provisions of the act. Then perhaps it can be determined whether the Administration's pledge to voter rights is political rhetoric or a sincere commitment to the exercise of democracy.

D'ANDRE K. DORN
Washington, D.C.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

APPREHENSIONS

Bulbous nose, broad shoulders, mane of white hair, loose-fitting suit. Just before the vote, Speaker Tip O'Neill shambled down from the perch where he surveys the House and took his place in the well of the chamber. "I yield the remaining time to our beloved Speaker, the gentleman from Massachusetts!" exclaimed Clement Zablocki, Democrat of Milwaukee, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and spokesman for the arms freeze resolution. There was dead silence. It was 10 p.m.

He is typecast for the part: a shrewd, shambling old pol (he'll be 70 in December) who has been in the House thirty years and knows every secret in Washington. He has seen Presidents come and go; he's always got a friendly anecdote for his colleagues and shows a fierce partisanship for the underdog. The worldwide wave of antinuclear apprehension has finally washed up here, to the floor of the House of Representatives, and now it is a vote on which of two courses to follow—the Zablocki call for a "mutual and verifiable" freeze of U.S. and Soviet arsenals, or the Reagan Administration substitute, sponsored by Representative William Broomfield, Republican of Michigan, for a freeze at "equal and substantially reduced levels." There is a big difference between them. But Tip O'Neill doesn't talk about the difference. It shouldn't be a partisan matter, he says. He is reminiscing. Way back twenty-nine years ago, three or four Congressmen went out to Yucca Flats to see a nuclear explosion, he says. They had outlined a three-mile square city in the desert. The bomb went off and the whole thing went up. "Seven seconds later the repercussion hit us and knocked us off our benches. In comparison with what we have today, the bombs that we saw in those days were mere fuses. There is so much strength today that we can eliminate the world."

Tip O'Neill didn't try for oratorical effect. He just told softly what he had seen, and they listened breathlessly. He said that first Russia tries to build up to "equality," and then America tries to build up. Each fears the other, neither dares stop. The only way to stop, he said simply, is to freeze. "That way we will be protecting future civilization. I ask for the defeat of the Broomfield amendment and the passage of the resolution," he concluded.

They started the roll call at once. It was as exciting as a football game played on the big House electronic tally board. There was an almost exact balance, alternating with each vote. When it got to the end, 202 to 202, a few members changed sides, and Tip O'Neill, who rarely votes, cast a "nay," his first ballot in nearly a year. Even so, he lost in the final reshuffling, and the Administration won, 204 to 202, with the Broomfield substitute adopted. Few think it's the last word on the subject.

That's the paradox of the nuclear dilemma. The situation is too dangerous to allow a sensible remedy. At a press conference Reagan flatly expressed his belief that "the Soviet Union does have a definite margin of superiority." With the tenacity of an ideologue he has clung to that. The theory of inferiority, of course, goes back a long time. Kennedy campaigned against a "missile gap" that didn't exist. Later appeared the brigade of Russian soldiers maneuvering in Cuba. We were also fearful at one time that Moscow and Peking were "monolithic" against a common enemy, the United States. Galbraith calls it "the parochial and endlessly reiterated anticommunism of the Dulles era." George Kennan called it "the almost exclusive militarization of thinking and discourse about Soviet-American relations that now commands the Washington atmosphere."

Reagan's attack on the proposed Russian gas pipeline genuinely startled America's allies in Western Europe, I believe. I was in London last month when Reagan traveled through in connection with the Versailles summit, and he made a carefully crafted, low-keyed, and excellent speech there, which seemed to put most of their suspicions to rest. Then he returned to America and began the fight against the pipeline. I do not see how he can win this argument. The Russians can build without American technology and our effort to prevent our allies from selling equipment seems doomed. It fits into the larger question of arms control: there is hardly a more fundamental issue dividing the democratic alliance. Alexander Haig, former Secretary of State, told the American Bar Association convention last week (for a nice fee of $20,000) that we must beware "a confrontational mode with traditional friends and allies." He mentioned no names.

There are plenty of problems in the world right now besides confrontational challenges with Moscow. Here are two of them. The global banking system is awash with IOUs from poor countries that they may not be able to honor. The debts are mostly owed to affluent financial institutions abroad. Recession is worldwide. The financial structure has held up so far, but there is always fear. Last week Germany announced that A.E.G. Telefunken, the giant electronics group, couldn't pay its debts. It is the largest corporate collapse in Germany since World War II. So far it doesn't seem to be tied to the problem of the developing countries, but this is a jittery time for all world exchequers. Industrialized countries that ought to know better have been living beyond their means. (Italy, for example, has tolerated 15 percent inflation, and the forty-first government since World War II has just fallen.)

The second problem is right here in the U.S., where approximately one worker in ten is unemployed—the highest number since World War II. During this grim summer of 1982 black teenage unemployment in the slums is 50 percent or so. Who knows who'll throw the first brick? It starts with a minor argument, a warning, perhaps, to a black by a surly police officer. So far, thank heavens, everything has been quiet.

The suburban dweller has troubles of his own. The Dow Jones industrial average has sunk sharply. In the heyday of Ronald Reagan, it looked as though he would solve all our problems. The Dow Jones average then reached 1,024; last week it was down in the 780s. That's not the same as losing your job, of course, but it's a tremendous diminution of stored-up optimism, not to mention physical assets, and it makes a lot of investors wonder what's going on in Washington.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
AUGUST 30, 1982

MIDEAST IRONIES

The Middle East has long been a greenhouse for ironies, but none quite as striking as the one now flowering in Beirut. For eight weeks the West, and particularly the United States, has engaged in a massive effort to rescue the PLO, an organization that has warred on the West for fifteen years, a Soviet client with irredentist claims that promise the Middle East no peace until either it or Israel ceases to exist.

Why has Philip Habib engaged for two months in extraordinarily complicated negotiations to save the PLO? Why has the U.S. made its prestige contingent upon Mr. Habib's ability to produce a peaceful PLO exit from Lebanon? For the vast majority of Americans, and for this Administration, the answer does not lie in any sympathy with the PLO. They recognize that Yasir Arafat called for armed struggle, got armed struggle, and now has lost the armed struggle. They also remember the particular type of armed struggle that the PLO has waged. Unlike Israel, which despite its precautions has killed civilians in pursuit of enemy soldiers, the PLO has always made the killing of civilians an end in itself. Can anyone remember a single PLO attack in the last fifteen years on an Israeli military installation? The athletes in Munich and the schoolchildren of Maalot were not unfortunate innocents who happened to be living near Israeli artillery batteries, ammunition dumps, or military targets. They *were* the military targets.

To be sure, there are some, mostly in Europe, who want to save the PLO for its own sake, who want to support the fight against Israel to the last Palestinian. By and large, they are romantics caught up in national liberation mythology, or else they still believe—after fifteen years of evidence to the contrary—that the PLO will bring dignity and peace to the Palestinians. But most Americans know the PLO's record—know what it has done to others and what suffering its false promises and empty bravado have brought to the people it claims to represent.

Americans, like Israelis and Lebanese and Palestinians, would like to see Mr. Habib succeed and the war end without any more deaths on either side. But the PLO's interests are different. Had it been interested in ending the war with a minimum of bloodshed, it would have evacuated Beirut weeks ago. It discovered that by prolonging the fighting and multiplying the casualties it could both make political gains and an historic name for itself as the heroic band of fighters who held out against the Israelis longer than any other Arab army. (But then, Arab armies do not hide behind civilians.) The PLO's decisions in Beirut continue a longstanding policy of trying to exploit civilian deaths for its own political gain. Whether the corpses are Arab or Jewish seems to matter little to the PLO. But now two things have changed in the PLO political calculus. First, Arafat's men believe they have garnered all of the political capital to be gained from prolonging the battle for Beirut. And second, the Israeli thrust into west Beirut in the beginning of August, much decried in the West for "complicating" negotiations, seems to have concentrated PLO minds on the advantages of getting out. Negotiations speeded up remarkably after the Israeli move, a coincidence largely ignored by the State Department and the media. Negotiations may now be on the verge of success. We hope they are.

But the ironies abound. First, the Administration sent Mr. Habib to the Middle East and kept him there, all the while using extraordinary pressure and threats to restrain Israel, on the grounds that it is necessary in order to win the favor of moderate Arab regimes like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. There were dire predictions, mostly from American "Middle East consultants," of an end to the "peace process" or a cut-off of oil unless the U.S. forced an Israeli pullback. Yet Egypt has not even recalled its ambassador to Israel, and the OPEC meeting that took place immediately after the Israeli move into Lebanon voted to *raise* production ceilings—as always, for sound economic reasons. While

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the U.S. tries to save the PLO to please our Egyptian and Saudi friends, they refuse to allow them into their own countries, a sign of their regard for the PLO. Our attempts to get Syria to accept the PLO are even more ironical. In this case, we are imploring one Soviet client, implacably hostile to the U.S., to accept the defeated remnants of another Soviet client, even more hostile to American interests. And the Syrians are reportedly demanding a price *from the U.S.* for doing so—that the U.S. acquiesce to the Syrians' occupation of the Bekaa and northern Lebanon as the price for saving their PLO brothers. Most amazing, the U.S. sees nothing unusual in this transaction.

The most recent draft of the Habib plan calls for French troops, followed by Italians, to be stationed in Beirut to protect the PLO during its evacuation. The irony here cannot be more stark. Only last week Direct Action, a French terrorist group which is reported to be armed and supported by George Habash and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, one of the major PLO groups, threw a grenade into a Jewish restaurant in Paris and machine-gunned survivors and passersby. President Mitterrand attended a service for the dead, only a few days after supporting the U.N. resolution to embargo arms to Israel—arms that Israel uses to put George Habash out of the terrorism business. And now France will be sending troops to make sure that Habash escapes from Beirut to carry out his activities from some safe haven in the Arab world.

And yet it cannot be otherwise. The Israelis don't want to go into Beirut, with the attendant suffering for their own soldiers and for innocents in Beirut. They are prepared to see the PLO leave Lebanon in exactly the same way one is prepared to see hijackers receive safe passage from airplanes in order to save the civilians, even though safe passage assures that they will have the capacity to hijack again. For what is happening in Beirut is a hijacking, not a siege. Israel has no desire to conquer Beirut, to subdue it, or to keep it. Its only object is to get to a group of fighters hiding inside. That is precisely what happens in a hijacking. Security forces have no territorial claims on the plane. They only want to get the hijackers out.

But we must not underestimate the cost in future lives and political instability of saving the PLO. *The New York Times* recently noted the need to engage Jordan in the next stage of negotiations. But the presence of the PLO in Jordan can only make that prospect more uncertain, and increase the risk to King Hussein of moving in the direction of peace. Similarly, the rescue of George Habash and others dedicated to random terror will guarantee that there will be more killing in the months and years to come.

Thus the moral and political calculus of evacuating the PLO from Beirut is a complicated one. Nevertheless, the eviction of the PLO will have large positive consequences for the Middle East. It will allow Lebanon to restore its delicate system of internal accommodations that had been disrupted by the PLO and Syria. It will mean that there will be no more raids and counterraids across the Lebanese-Israeli border, and that Galilee and southern Lebanon will live in peace. And it will make possible for the first time a solution to the problems of Lebanon and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For Lebanon it will mean that negotiations can begin for a withdrawal of both Syrian and Israeli troops under conditions that will ensure that Lebanon will not be used by either to attack the other. As for the Israeli-Palestinian question, there will finally be a chance for accommodation on the West Bank and Gaza. Unless, that is, cynics in the West combine to try to revive the PLO and its irredentist imperative to make Israel's fate, and not that of the West Bank, the ultimate question. Under those

ASK HIM IF HE HAS SOME MORE DIGNIFIED WAY OUT THAN THAT LADDER-- ARE THE ACCOMMODATIONS OUT THERE SATISFACTORY? WHAT TIME ARE THEY SERVING BRUNCH? CAN WE CHECK OUR LUGGAGE? IS HIS FIRE ENGINE A TASTEFUL COLOR?
PLO
BEN SARGENT
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circumstances, negotiations on the West Bank are doomed.

On the other hand, if the Palestinians on the West Bank can finally overcome their tragic history of following leaders with maximal demands producing less than minimal results, and can decide that the time has come to compromise with Israel, there is a chance for peace. Such an event would be comparable to Anwar Sadat's flying to Jerusalem. Sadat's stroke was a permanent refutation of Arafat's contention that recognition of Israel is the last trump card. Sadat proved that it is the first card, that it has a dramatic and overwhelming effect on Israel's desire for peace, and that it can produce revolutionary changes in Israeli opinion overnight. In the end, he proved that recognition—genuine, unconditional, and guaranteed—can lead to an accommodation that satisfies both sides.

IT IS TRUE THAT Menachem Begin and a minority in Israel would prefer to annex the West Bank. It is also true that Mr. Begin is intent on pursuing a settlement policy that might eventually make an accommodation impossible. But he can pursue his settlement policy only because of the absence of any Palestinians to bargain with. If it is true that no government of Israel could negotiate with the PLO and survive, it is also true that no government of Israel could refuse a West Bank offer of accommodation and coexistence—and survive. A Palestinian leadership willing to compromise with Israel would find a vast reservoir of Israelis sick of war and eager to live in peace and mutual respect.

We are wounded and troubled by the suffering of innocent civilians in Beirut. We are also wary of those who are ready with instant solutions for the dilemmas posed by this war. As Saul Bellow has noted, the Middle East has become the moral resort area of the West. The moral sunbathers call for a ceasefire in place and the restoration of normal services to west Beirut. That is a call for stalemate, and in the middle of a war, a prescription for indefinite bleeding, shelling, raiding, and suffering. It is also a guarantee that the PLO, which stalled for eight weeks and used every tactic to stay in Beirut, will stay indefinitely, that the war will continue, and that Lebanon, which has demanded that the PLO leave so that it can breathe again, will not be restored to life.

War is monstrous. And war against terrorists who specialize in shooting civilians while hiding behind other civilians is all the more monstrous. This war will end when the PLO realizes that it cannot rely on misguided American moral sentiment or American misperception of its own interests to permit it to stay in Beirut. A final irony of this tragedy is that it took Israel's advance into west Beirut, over frenzied objections in the West, to send the PLO that message. Now that it has been received, there is a chance for peace in Lebanon.

NOTEBOOK

□ "I THINK AMERICANS now have the best Secretary of the Interior they've ever had." These were the words of James Watt on a recent episode of ABC's "Nightline." Interlocutor Sam Donaldson said quickly, "If you do say so yourself." Mr. Watt replied, "Well, Sam, you weren't going to say it, so I wanted to say it." Later in the program, Secretary Watt divided Americans into two categories: not liberals and Americans this time, but those who like hunting, fishing, and jobs, on the one hand, and those who want "to preserve everything" on the other. But how about category no. 3—those who want to preserve everything except Mr. Watt?

□ RECENTLY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE Caspar Weinberger drafted a petition demanding that the speed limit on the road in front of his summer house in Somersville, Maine, be reduced. Why? Because "the lives of our children are endangered by the present 45-mph limit." Weinberger's Bar Harbor neighbors found this argument "ironic," and they wondered whether its author might not be interested in a deal: a reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph in exchange for his doing "something to stop rather than promote the nuclear arms race." No response, so far, from the Department of Defense.

□ THE AMERICAN SOCIETY of Composers, Authors, and Publishers has chosen John Lahr to receive one of its fifteenth annual ASCAP-Deems Taylor Awards for outstanding books and articles on music. Mr. Lahr was honored for his article "The Beatles Considered," which appeared in THE NEW REPUBLIC's issue for December 2, 1981.

□ "LEBANON EYEWITNESS," by Martin Peretz, TNR's August 2 cover story, is available as a reprint. The price per reprint, including postage, is $1 for 1 to 10 reprints; 75 cents for 11 to 100; and 50 cents for more than 100. Write to Jeff Poorman, circulation manager, THE NEW REPUBLIC, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. For prices on very large orders, call Mr. Poorman at (202) 331-7494.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "This little book confirms the general impression that the present actual, though informal, head of the Soviet government possesses neither the massive intellectual power of Lenin nor the brilliant originality of Trotsky. His mind is rather slow and confined; consecutive thought is not its natural function, but a painful process; energetic assertion and reassertion take its place." (Brief review of the book *Foundation of Leninism*, by Joseph Stalin, TNR, August 31, 1932.)

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WHITE HOUSE WATCH

REAGAN BESIEGED

EXCEPT FOR SOME vacation time in California, President Reagan is due to spend the next two-and-a-half months fighting for the survival of his economic program—first against fellow Republicans and then against the Democrats. White House aides say that the two efforts are intertwined: if the President can't convince members of his own party to support him on taxes, he will be less able to head a national Republican election campaign against the Democrats. If Democrats score major gains in November, Reagan's ability to follow through on his economic program will be diminished. For those who think that Reaganomics is an unmitigated, irredeemable disaster, these dangers may look like blessings. On the other hand, those who would like to see the President have a four-year shot at turning the economy around have to view the coming weeks as a time of suspense and maybe anguish.

The White House had hoped to slide by the first fight entirely and to be well launched into the second by now. Administration officials worked closely with Senate Finance Committee chairman Bob Dole in putting together his $99-billion tax increase package, but the plan was for Reagan to keep his distance from it. When (with monumental gall, in view of the $120-billion-plus deficits he's projecting) the President endorsed the proposed constitutional amendment for a balanced federal budget on July 19, he slipped into his speech a fast two-sentence nod toward the Dole bill. In the rest of his talk on the Capitol steps, he trumpeted the themes of the November campaign: we promised to make a New Beginning . . . we've cut the growth of federal spending . . . our program has been on the books less than a year . . . we've only begun to wean ourselves away from overtaxing and overspending . . . together we can. . . .

Later, with a Republican revolt brewing in the House against the tax bill, with the conservative weekly *Human Events* denouncing "the largest tax increase in history," and with columnists Evans and Novak proclaiming the Dole bill a new form of McGovernism, the President was primed to defend the tax increase at his July 28 press conference. But the prepared opening statement was November stuff: "We've begun to rescue this economy and the first evidence of recovery has been cited—but it's only a beginning. Many of our people are suffering and nothing has been more painful to me than the slowness of our progress. I understand that statistics like falling interest rates, smaller price increases and a better gross national product are cold comfort to Americans who feel trapped by the economy. It's going to require enormous effort and patience from every one of us to correct the problems we inherited. But slowly and surely we're working our way back to prosperity."

As things worked out, no reporter at the press conference asked about the tax bill, and so the right-wing rebellion against it continued to blossom without direct Presidential intervention. The lead paragraph of practically every news story on the measure referred to it as "the largest tax increase in history," neglecting to point out that it followed (and represented a mere 20 percent retreat from) the largest tax decrease in history. Reagan finally went into action only when some of his close associates, including former White House aides Lyn Nofziger and Martin Anderson, had signed up with the rebels, who were led by true believers Richard Viguerie and Jack Kemp, and when the mood of House Republicans turned hostile to the measure. The President was in danger of suffering his first major Congressional defeat, at the hands not of woolly liberals but of a coalition of friends—right-wing, supply-side, and anti-tax ideologues; shaky incumbents scared of tax hikes in an election year; other Republicans mad at the Democratic leadership's unwillingness to follow through on promised spending cuts; and still others offended by the House's abandonment of its constitutional prerogative to initiate spending and taxing measures. With Republicans abandoning the President's program, Ways and Means chairman Dan Rostenkowski served notice that Democrats were not going to pull it out for him, and would vote against it unless the President could round up one hundred Republican votes.

BELATEDLY, the President began making the argument to Republican Representatives that he might have made on the Capitol steps or in his TV press conference had not posturing and partisan politics been more compelling: the tax increase is not, in fact, the largest in history (for the period 1983 to 1985, Social Security tax increases legislated in 1977 will amount to $112 billion). Of the $99-billion revenue to be gained under the Dole measure over three years, $31 billion will come not from new taxes at all, but from improved collection procedures under existing tax laws. The tax increases are part of a deficit-reduction deal reached with the Democrats that includes spending cuts nearly three times as big. Unless deficits are reduced, interest rates are likely to begin rising again, cutting off recovery from the recession. The tax increases fall heaviest on corporations, allow for preservation of individual tax cuts passed last year, and help undercut Democratic charges that the Republican program favors the rich.

There are some strong political arguments being put to the Republicans, too: if deficits aren't controlled and interest rates go back up, they will get the blame in November, and if the President loses this one in Congress and his job rating goes down, the whole

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party will suffer at the polls. Presumably it was such logic, rather than economic arguments, that convinced Lyn Nofziger to return to the fold and help quell the Republican rebellion. With the Republican National Committee preparing a nationwide mailing and the President likely to make a TV address, White House aides by the middle of the second week in August were convinced they had begun pulling traditional Republicans out of the opposition camp, leaving only ideologues behind.

Some Reagan advisers, presumably favoring George Bush as Reagan's eventual successor, were not above using strong-arm tactics in defense of the President. In *The Washington Times* one charged that Jack Kemp was opposing the President to advance his own Presidential ambitions. Kemp does have such ambitions, but he is a supply-sider of almost luminescent sincerity who is opposing Reagan on principle, and at some risk. Kemp's attacker, not Kemp, is the opportunist in this piece.

EVEN AS THEY were hammering on Kemp and the right-wingers, Administration spokesmen have been forced to go easy—for the time being—on the Democrats. Reagan needs nearly one hundred twenty Democrats to pass the tax and spending bill, and doesn't want to offend them with harsh partisanship. White House aides are reasonably confident that the Democrats will cooperate if the President can collect enough Republican votes. The Democrats, they say, do not want to be blamed for the failure of the budget process or for high interest rates. The measure does contain tax reform measures that Democrats have been seeking. And this is Dan Rostenkowski's chance to have a major influence on policy and improve his chances to become the next Speaker of the House.

Win or lose, though, once the tax fight is over the November campaign begins anew, and the themes are clear. The Republicans will try to convince voters to ignore present realities—the worst recession and highest unemployment since the Great Depression—and look at 1982 in what one Reagan political aide calls "transcendent terms." Voters are to be told that they set upon a fundamental change in the direction of America in 1980, that progress has been made on inflation, that despite tough going (attributable to past Administrations) a recovery is nigh and that to turn back to the old Democratic ways would be disastrous.

Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin says there is evidence that this Republican strategy can work. He says that when voters are asked whom they blame for the nation's economic plight, 48 percent say the Democrats and Jimmy Carter, and 19 percent say Reagan and the Republicans. Eighteen months ago, Wirthlin says, 70 percent of the electorate was willing to wait a year or longer to see the President's economic program work; today, 60 percent still will do so, giving Reagan "a pool of patience" that is wide and deep. Reagan's overall job rating level is back to 51 percent favorable and 44 percent unfavorable, according to Wirthlin, and it is holding steady. Wirthlin said that, barring terrible economic news, Republican House losses in November ought to be in the range of fifteen to twenty seats, fifteen being the average off-year election loss in a new President's first term. Officials at the Republican National Committee are predicting even smaller losses, claiming that the party has more money, better candidates, and fewer vulnerable incumbents than the Democrats.

Democratic pollsters and political experts aren't buying this analysis at all. Patrick Caddell, who polled for Jimmy Carter, says that he used to find evidence of a "patience pool" operating for Carter, but that it did not materialize on election day. "People judge your performance," Caddell says. "You get rewarded or punished on the basis of the current situation." Caddell, most public polls, and reportedly even Republican pollsters find Reagan's current performance ratings to be low, especially on the economy. The latest Harris poll, for example, showed the public disapproving Reagan's economic performance by two to one, and his rating for "inspiring confidence in the White House" down to 39 percent. A Reagan political adviser acknowledged that when Wirthlin asked citizens whether things are moving "in the right direction" or were "off the track," the judgment was two-to-one negative, just as it was when Reagan took office. When Wirthlin asked people whether Reagan policies were hurting them, more than 50 percent said yes; when he asked if they thought those policies eventually would help, only 49 percent agreed, which is a drop from previous findings.

CADDELL THINKS that enough doubt exists about Reagan, his policies, and his motives that Democratic candidates can frontally attack the President, as Senator Edward Kennedy did in his midterm convention speech in Philadelphia. However, Democratic Party officials are inclined to be more cautious. Ann Lewis, political director of the DNC, says, "We're advising candidates not to lead a charge against Ronald Reagan personally. He still does have a reservoir of popular support. But that does not extend to his policies, and the best evidence for that is that Republican candidates are not supporting them. In 1980, they all were saying, 'we are mere privates in Ronald Reagan's army.' Today, they're all colonels staging a coup of one sort or another. Who is campaigning on the theme, 'Ronald Reagan needs me there'? No one." The Democrats smell blood in Republican disunity, which is why Ronald Reagan's fight to keep his party together is as vital as his fight against the Democrats in November. In fact, it's all part of the same fight.

MORTON KONDRACKE

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Miracle cures at crippling costs.

THE KIDNEY EXPERIMENT

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1971, outside the House Ways and Means Committee hearing room, Charlotte Glazer stuck two needles into her husband's arm. His blood began to flow through the tubes that connected him to an apparatus the size of a washing machine. With a determined look on his face, Shep Glazer walked into the hearing room rolling the machine in front of him like a shopping cart. Glazer, vice president of the National Association of Patients on Hemodialysis, was dialyzing himself as testimony supporting national health insurance legislation.

As with all previous and subsequent attempts, a national health care bill never emerged from Congress. But Glazer's demonstration stunned those who witnessed it, and Congress did fulfill his wish that kidney patients be provided for. By overwhelming majorities in both Houses, it passed an amendment to the Social Security Act which entitles patients like Shep Glazer to full Medicare benefits.

Glazer suffered from end-stage kidney disease, a condition in which the kidneys can no longer filter waste products from the blood. As its name suggests, it is always fatal if untreated. In 1972 kidney failure was the nation's fourth leading cause of death, even though two reliable treatments had been developed. One of those treatments, kidney transplants, can be a lifetime cure if immune rejection, which occurs in about 30 percent of cases, does not set in. The other one, dialysis, must be performed two or three times a week for a lifetime, or until a transplant can be done. But as Shep Glazer demonstrated, dialysis permits a patient to work and to lead a relatively normal life. Both treatments are expensive, especially dialysis. In 1972 only two thousand people had transplants, and only seven thousand had insurance or enough private money to pay for dialysis, or were part of a research project that paid for it. Thousands of other victims of kidney failure were effectively condemned to death.

By passing the Social Security Amendments of 1972, Congress created, in effect, a national health insurance program for a single disease. It was an implicit rejection of the "ability to pay" criterion for the allocation of life-saving medical technology. Since July 1, 1973, 93 percent of people with chronic kidney failure have been entitled to Medicare benefits covering virtually the entire cost of end-stage kidney treatment. The remaining 7 percent are covered by veterans' benefits, Medicaid, state programs, and the like.

Even the most conservative members of Congress would agree with the assessment of Republican Senator David Durenberger of Minnesota that "the ESRD [end-stage renal disease] program has been extremely successful in providing access to the medical technology needed to treat individuals with permanent kidney failure." They would also agree with Margaret Diener, executive director of Shep Glazer's old group, that "the federal funding has not only been responsible for keeping literally tens of thousands of people alive, but has also enabled them to continue to be productive members of our society."

But the program's success has not been cheap. Senator Robert Dole, one of the sponsors of the bill to help kidney patients, conceded last year that "actual program costs were more than three times greater than estimates." At the beginning, the cost of the whole kidney disease program was projected at $75 million for the first full year and $250 million per year after four years. In practice, the budget for the first full year, including both dialysis and kidney transplants, was over $280 million. By 1980 it was up to $1.4 billion, and the Senate Finance Committee estimates the cost for 1984 at $2.4 billion. Although ESRD patients make up only .25 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries, they account for nearly 4 percent of the total Medicare budget and about 10 percent of out-patient Medicare payments.

ONE REASON for this extraordinary expense is the cost of dialysis, which accounts for 85 to 90 percent of all kidney disease care. The main technological advance, home dialysis, which costs one-third less than dialysis in an out-patient facility, has remained a small percentage of the total program—about 15 percent. Another reason is the success of dialysis—kidney disease patients receiving treatment are living longer than physicians had expected.

And finally, federal funding encourages the use of dialysis. Before 1972 almost all dialysis treatment was done by hospitals. Now more than half of it is done by private, profitmaking facilities set up expressly to provide government-financed dialysis. Since these facilities receive fixed payments per dialysis treatment, it is in their financial interest to keep the per-treatment cost down while increasing the number of patients. By 1980 the number of patients on dialysis had grown to 63,000; by 1984, 80,000 patients are expected to be enrolled in the ESRD program. This is not because profitmaking facilities are dialyzing patients who do not need treatment, but because the definition of a patient's need for dialysis has changed. As Dr. Arnold Relman, editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine* and an expert on kidney disease, puts it, "When the government says, 'We'll pick up the tab, doctor, all you do is assure us that the patient has chronic end-stage uremia,' utilization of medical resources is going to be tremendously broadened. . . . Since 1972 we have become much more liberal in our indications for the use of dialysis treatment." Prior to the ESRD program, kidney disease patients over 55, patients with other diseases such as diabetes or cancer, and young children

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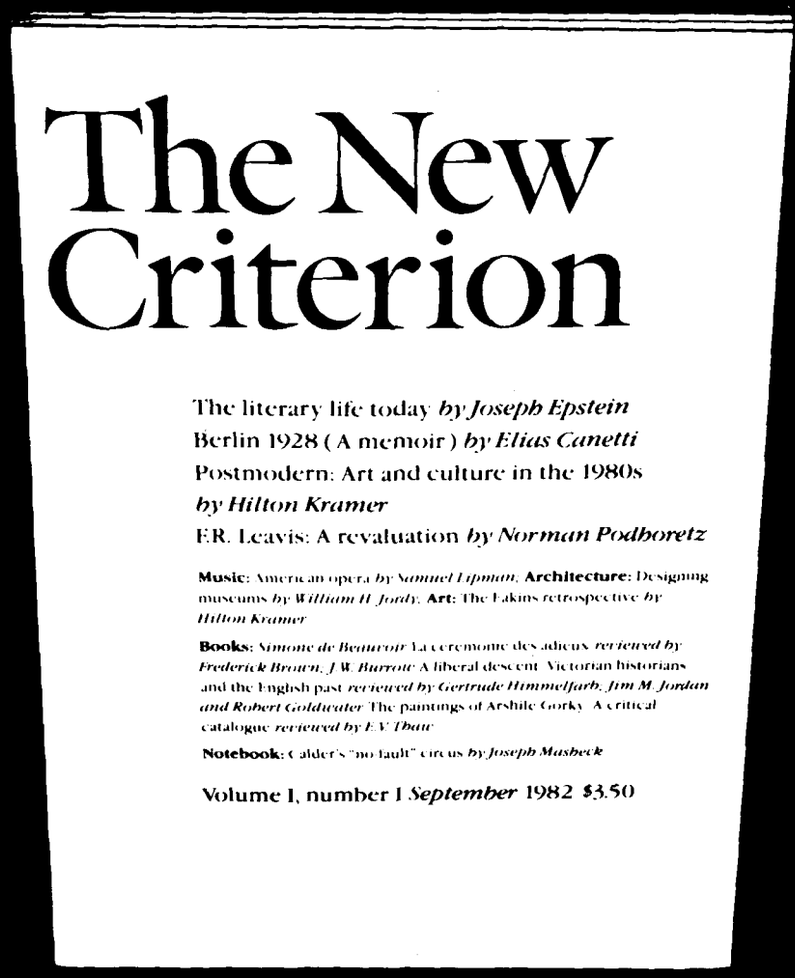
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were denied dialysis. Today these patients are provided treatment if they request it, and doctors are attempting dialysis on ambiguous cases. In so doing, they are fulfilling their duty to their patients.

Now the government is stuck. In the ESRD program there is little fraud or abuse to reduce. Nor, according to Dr. Richard Rettig, the head of a Rand Corporation study on the program, are there "immediate prospects on the horizon for significant new treatment or preventive capabilities" that might reduce costs. And as Carolyne Davis, administrator of the Health Care Financing Administration, which manages the ESRD program, says, "the increase in costs that is attributable to the increase in beneficiaries, of course, cannot be controlled."

The ESRD program has been at once a spectacular medical success and a fiscal disaster. As such, it points to a problem which health policymakers are going to have to face sooner or later. In the last decade, the never-ending efforts of medical researchers have opened the way to startling new technologies for medical treatments. Liver transplants for cirrhosis, blood-clotting proteins for hemophilia, artificial hearts for infarction—in the next decade, these and other therapies will become increasingly available as standard clinical treatments. Like dialysis, they will save thousands or even millions of lives—and they will cost enormous sums of money.

HOW WILL THESE medical goods be allocated? That is the agonizing question the new technologies raise. In "The Idea of Equality," the British moral philosopher Bernard Williams writes:

> Leaving aside preventive medicine, the proper ground of distribution of medical care is ill health: this is a necessary truth. Now in very many societies, while ill health may be a necessary condition of receiving treatment, it does not work as a sufficient condition, since such treatment costs money, and not all who are ill have the money; hence the possession of sufficient money becomes in fact an additional necessary condition of actually receiving treatment.

When treatment means the difference between life and death, that "additional necessary condition" is morally repugnant. Or so Congress implicitly held when it enacted the ESRD program. Its solution was simply to pay for whatever treatment doctors and patients deemed necessary. But as expensive life-saving technologies proliferate, that solution will become increasingly untenable. Certain kinds of medical decision-making, if not medicine itself, will inevitably have to be socialized—unless life itself is to be bought and sold like yachts or diamonds. Whatever body Congress empowers to make those decisions may perhaps invoke rules similar to those used for dialysis before the ESRD program was adopted.

The Reagan Administration, with its obsessive attachment to the market, is clearly incapable of coming to grips with this question. There is little to suggest that the Democrats are ready to face it either, but eventually they will have to. Miraculous life-saving treatments give mortals godlike powers—and therefore require godlike decisions. Society will simply be unable to save everyone the medical profession will have the technical power to cure. The real price of medicine's success is that it will force us to choose who shall live and who shall die.

EZEKIEL EMANUEL

Oily welfare applicants.

THE SYNFUELS FIASCO

THE PRELIMINARY OBITUARIES for synthetic fuels came fast and furiously last May after Exxon pulled out of the five-billion-dollar Colony oil shale project in Colorado. *The Washington Post* said synfuels were "struck a crippling blow." *The New York Times* said the industry "stands demoralized and uncertain." *Time* called Exxon's move "a major setback," and *Newsweek* heralded "The Death of Synfuels." What seems to have escaped notice is the fact that the government-owned Synthetic Fuels Corporation now has almost $15 billion to shell out to the private sector over the next two years, free of Congressional scrutiny. The smell of easy money has drawn a pack of trade associations and lobbying groups to help sniff out funds for synfuels. The powerful new interest group includes most of the country's leading oil companies, and their hounds aren't about to abandon the synfuel hunt easily.

The synfuel debate has turned conventional political rhetoric on its head. Supporters of synfuel development, representing mainly giant corporations, are pushing vigorous government intervention. Environmentalists who oppose synfuels are talking about the distortion of credit markets and unproductive diversion of capital. The magic of the marketplace notwithstanding, the Reagan Administration has kept intact the object of both these groups' concern: the corporate welfare program known as the Synthetic Fuels Corporation. And at a time of government retrenchment, the SFC is under pressure to disburse its money.

The Energy Security Act, which created the SFC, was conceived three summers ago as gas lines stretched for miles and the Iranian revolution made dependence on foreign oil a national concern. The bill passed Congress overwhelmingly a year later. It called for the equivalent of 500,000 barrels of oil a day by 1987 and two million a day by 1992. The Carter Administration,

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confronted by upheavals in the Middle East, decided that the environmental and economic uncertainties associated with synfuels were outweighed by the need to address the energy crisis. The SFC was proposed and justified as a guarantor of national security.

The technology for converting coal into synthetic crude oil has been around for more than a century. Oil companies had traditionally discouraged the rise of a competitive synfuel alternative, until they acquired substantial coal reserves. (The oil industry greeted Dwight Eisenhower's proposal for synfuel development with cries of government interference, and he abandoned the attempt in 1953.) But with the steady rise of oil prices and Carter's solid support for synfuels, companies like Exxon rushed to carve out a significant share of the market. Synfuel plants require huge capital investments, and synfuel prices have always been projected as slightly higher than oil prices. The SFC was established to give the private sector the extra push necessary for synfuel development, through loan and price guarantees and purchase agreements. These forms of federal assistance do not show up in deficit figures unless the government has to pay the difference between oil prices and synfuel prices, or unless the large plants fail miserably.

But the legislation was ill-timed. Since 1979 the decontrol of oil prices, the recession, conservation, and divisiveness within OPEC have reduced oil imports from more than eight million barrels a day to about five million. If prices in the volatile oil market stay low, the government will have to spend billions of dollars to create a viable industry. The Office of Technology Assessment has put the cost of producing five million barrels of synfuels a day by the year 2000 between $250 billion and $450 billion. This amounts to a virtual war mobilization effort. When oil prices dropped and interest rates stayed high, the plants began to look increasingly unattractive. Even the industry's staunchest advocates now concede that the targets set two years ago were unrealistic.

ALTHOUGH the SFC's top officials have distinctly Reaganite pedigrees, they are quick to justify government intervention. "We're a versatile entity with the best of all worlds: Republican management and the Democratic philosophy of national mobilization," says Bob Monks, one of five directors. "We feel the risk of the loss of national sovereignty and the risk of decreased living standards in the event of oil-supply disruption outweigh the risks of a huge burden to the taxpayer." The SFC is fond of saying that it cannot provide the final answer to the nation's energy needs, but should serve as a "bridge" between nonrenewable resources such as oil and renewable resources such as solar power.

Those who fear the loss of national sovereignty might well be inclined to give the grand synfuels experiment the benefit of the doubt, particularly as the Iran-Iraq war intensifies. But the prospect of spending billions on this "bridge" irks both those who have disliked the idea of taxpayers shouldering the risks for huge corporations since the SFC's founding and those who criticize Reagan's energy policy as shortsighted. The SFC's method of operation has borne out the fears raised by opponents two years ago without enhancing national security, even by the broadest definition.

OVER THE PAST year the SFC has whittled down a list of sixty-three applications to two finalists for federal assistance. But even the winners now getting ready to bargain for SFC funds raise serious doubts about the feasibility of synfuels. The Hampshire energy liquefaction project in Wyoming has requested an undisclosed sum for its two-billion-dollar undertaking. The Environmental Policy Center in Washington reported that Hampshire's sponsors have not yet lined up an assured supply of coal and water—the two main elements of the synfuel conversion process.

The other finalist is the $5.2-billion Breckenridge project in Kentucky, sponsored by Bechtel and an Ashland Oil subsidiary. The two sponsors recently cut their projected plant capacity in half because of rising costs, without moderating their request for three billion dollars in federal assistance. Ashland's performance in running a pilot liquefaction plant, designed to serve as a model for Breckenridge, was described by the Department of Energy's inspector general as "dismal." Bechtel has an engineering contract to build the Breckenridge plant, and whether or not Breckenridge and synfuels prove commercially viable, Bechtel will be paid for the huge construction costs involved in its development.

Despite these signals, SFC officials insist that Hampshire and Breckenridge offer the best model for the nascent industry. Admittedly, the SFC didn't have much to choose from; one of its eleven finalists was a project sponsored by that guardian of American energy interests, the government of Kuwait. Exxon's withdrawal from the Colony project and the subsequent reaction shows even more clearly that the synfuel industry—and the SFC—has a limited definition of national security. Exxon declined federal aid for its 60 percent of the shale oil program, but its partner, Tosco, a relatively small oil shale company, had a $1.1 billion loan guarantee, tantamount to an indirect subsidy for Exxon. Officials of the two corporations predicted that by the late 1980s Colony would churn out 45,000 barrels a day. The picture changed as oil prices dropped. Exxon pulled out and, as the contract stipulated, bought out Tosco's share in the project. Colony now stands idle, awaiting an increase in oil prices that would prompt Exxon to return—with full control.

House Majority Leader Jim Wright, a synfuel enthusiast, responded to Exxon's decision by saying, "What's good for Exxon is not necessarily good for the country." This underscores the fallacy in entrusting a pur-

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portedly urgent energy-security program to Exxon or to those, like Ashland, with pretensions to Exxon's throne. After all, synfuels are meant to be alternatives to oil, which is Exxon's lifeblood. Exxon has not ruled out the possibility of future synfuel involvement, but its 1981 annual report shows that national security is a secondary consideration: "Current adequate supplies of conventional oil and favorable results of exploration have affected the pace at which synthetic fuels from coal and oil shale enter the energy picture, but not the need for developing those alternative resources. . . . We expect to be a profitable supplier of synthetic fuels as that industry emerges." Presumably, Exxon will not return to Colony until oil prices go up. The future of synfuels, then, paradoxically depends on high oil prices. High oil prices depend in large part on decisions made by the international oil cartel. Yet the whole purpose of synfuels was to make the nation independent of the cartel's decisions.

THE RISK to the taxpayer is even higher now that the world's largest corporation has labeled synfuels cost-ineffective. The qualms raised by environmentalists three years ago remain just as strong. Undaunted, the SFC bureaucracy has quietly encouraged a potentially illegal proposal made by America's second-largest corporation, Mobil Oil. Rawleigh Warner Jr., Mobil's president, sent a letter regarding synfuels to fifteen oil companies on June 3, soon after Exxon's withdrawal from Colony. "Although we as an industry have always championed the free market," Warner wrote, "it is apparent that this problem demands the kind of cooperation that can only come from a massive joint industry effort combined with government assistance." Through this joint venture the companies could "spread the risk and finance a major oil shale project now, so that all of us can be ready for full-scale exploitation at the time we can forecast the economics that make individual ventures feasible." Warner proposed a "meeting to discuss our suggestions."

Warner's suggestion was interpreted by the SFC as a way to rekindle the synfuel flame. But House Democrats Toby Moffett of Connecticut and Benjamin Rosenthal of New York asked the Justice Department on July 30 to investigate possible antitrust violations contained in Warner's letter. The Mobil initiative seems like a transparent attempt to gain domination of the shale oil market, "with government assistance." The two small-scale synfuel plants proceeding on schedule—Union Oil's shale project in Colorado and the Great Plains coal gasification plant in North Dakota—belie the notion that private companies have to "cooperate" to make synfuel development work.

Does the Reagan Administration really want a consortium of the nation's largest oil companies to develop alternative resources and defend the national interest? Apparently so, because the Administration still clings to the energy-security rationale to justify the SFC. Some observers say the Department of Defense has now become synfuels' biggest supporter; given the department's success in getting almost everything it wants, this should please those seeking government aid. An option paper circulating around the White House, which included a proposal for the abolition of the SFC, has reportedly been shelved. Not surprisingly, the Mobil letter did not betray a trace of concern for national security. One industry lobbyist has a more imaginative pretext for government assistance. "The benefits of synfuels may eventually be measured by the uneconomic nature of the plants," says Michael Koleda, head of the private National Council on Synthetic Fuels. "If we can have a restraining effect on oil prices, then we will have achieved our goal." In other words, some synfuel proponents think taxpayers should spend billions to prop up an uneconomical industry. These capitalists may be against capitalism, but they will never be against profits.

The current oil glut and decline in prices do not mean that the energy crisis is over, as some conservatives have claimed. A prescient energy policy, along the lines recently proposed by Daniel Yergin in these pages ("The Agenda After Reagan: Energy," TNR, March 31), would encourage conservation, emergency preparedness, research into renewable sources such as solar energy, and protection for low-income consumers. But the Reagan Administration has refused to sink money into the other end of its "bridge." The 1983 budget gutted research money for solar energy while maintaining direct subsidies to the flagging and costly nuclear power industry. The outlay for the administrative costs of the SFC this year comes to $44.9 million, more than twice the measly $21.8 million allocated to the federal energy conservation program. Surely some of the SFC's $15 billion could help achieve genuine energy independence, rather than dependence on oil companies with global interests. Appeals to national security are hollow without a long-term strategy.

Mobil, Exxon, and other oil giants should be able to fend quite nicely for themselves without handouts from the government. Reagan's energy policy, insofar as he can be said to have one, has been to side consistently with huge corporations that have interests in synfuels and nuclear power while ignoring the needs of the consumer. But it requires remarkable temerity to ask the consumer to absorb the risk for companies that have a narrow conception of the national interest. Indeed, the conduct of the SFC under Reagan has been more in line with multinational security than with national security. In the process, the SFC has provided ample fuel for conspiracy theories but not a drop of fuel for America. Reagan would win a small victory for the taxpayer (not to mention free capitalism) by abolishing the SFC.

LAURENCE GRAFSTEIN

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A Simplified Income Tax

Imagine an income tax so simple and straightforward that all you do is add up your income for the year and send a modest percentage of it to Uncle Sam. No deductions. No shelters. No loopholes. The same rate would apply to all, across the board.

The idea of a flat-rate tax has been around for years. Today it's bubbling up afresh in the mounting frustration over budget deficits and the nation's economic troubles, along with public disaffection with the existing tax system.

The flat tax has supporters in both parties and across the political spectrum. Several bills on it have been introduced in Congress. The tax rates being discussed generally range below 25%. The top rate is now 50%.

Advocates see the flat tax as a way to stimulate productive enterprise and steer the economy back on a growth path. The idea is that people would be encouraged to work harder, take greater risks, and invest and save more because they'd be able to keep more of what they earned. No longer would they be taxed at ever-higher rates as their income rose.

In addition, proponents say, there would be more equity in the tax system. All would pay their fair share. Shelters and loopholes would be done away with. Cheating through fraudulent deductions would be eliminated.

In pure form, a flat tax would have no exemptions or deductions. But purity would have to give way to practicality. There should be an element of progressiveness: higher rates for higher income earners.

Most current discussion centers on providing for a base of exempt income. The exemption, for example, could be the first $10,000 of income. With a flat rate of 10%, someone with an income of $20,000 would pay a tax of $1,000. The effective rate would be 5%. A person with $100,000 in income would pay a tax of $9,000, or an effective rate of 9%.

Greater progressivity could be achieved through a tax of two or three tiers. One proposal calls for no tax on income below $17,500, a rate of 18% on incomes from $17,500 to $50,000, and 25% above $50,000.

Numerous options are being discussed. One is to have no income exempted from taxation. Instead, each person would get a $250 tax credit. For a family of four, total credit of $1,000 would be equivalent to an exemption of $10,000, given a 10% rate.

Arriving at a simple flat tax would be anything but simple. State and local governments depend on their ability to issue tax-free bonds. Institutions, organizations, and causes of all sorts need contributions that are now tax-deductible. Homeowners cherish the deductibility of their mortgage interest. All these things would have to be worked out carefully.

A streamlined tax has considerable appeal in its potential for simplicity, fairness, and revenue-raising effectiveness. It's an idea that merits full scrutiny and debate.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

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Ideological animus triumphs over the voluntarism vogue.

VISTA's LOST HORIZONS

By Ann Hulbert

LAST SPRING, at Congressional reauthorization hearings for the Volunteers in Service to America program, one of its founding fathers, Hyman Bookbinder, speculated that "if there was not a VISTA on the books today, I think this Reagan Administration would have probably joyfully invented it. It is so consistent with the basic philosophy of the current Administration." The uplifting acronym does indeed sound like vintage Ronald Reagan rhetoric, and the theme of voluntarism has been one of his favorites ever since his nomination, when he intoned: "Let us pledge to restore, in our time, the American spirit of voluntary service, of cooperation, of private and community initiative, a spirit that flows like a deep and mighty river through the history of our nation."

But as it happens, there is a VISTA program on the books, and the Reagan Administration is joyfully set on dismantling it. Dedication to the spirit of partisan politics apparently flows more deeply and mightily than devotion to the spirit of voluntary service in the Republican regime. VISTA, an antipoverty volunteer program begun under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, has had a peripatetic, politicized existence: popular when the Democrats are in power, downplayed when the Republicans have their turn. Originally conceived as a "domestic Peace Corps" of full-time, stipended volunteers enlisted in LBJ's War on Poverty, VISTA was tucked safely out of sight in Nixon's ACTION agency and neglected under President Ford. But VISTA flourished under President Carter and his ACTION director, Sam Brown, sending more volunteers than ever before (over four thousand) to spend a year working on hundreds of different projects in neighborhoods across the country—helping a tenant's group insulate apartments in New England, for example, or giving out food to the needy in New York. With Reagan's election, VISTA's fortunes have declined more dramatically than ever, at the same time that voluntarism has been touted as the up-and-coming trend.

James Burnley, Reagan's first director of VISTA, emphasized the partisan shift in an article, "Take My Agency—Please!," in the April 1982 *Conservative Digest*:

> There may not be another agency in the federal government where, on last Election Day, the political pendulum swung more broadly. One example: I am a conservative Republican from North Carolina. My predecessor as director, Marge Tabankin, won her political spurs on the radical fringes of the antiwar movement. In May 1972, at the height of the Vietnam War, she traveled to Hanoi, where she participated in a press conference denouncing supposed war crimes by the United States.

Haunted by this vivid vision of his predecessor, Burnley announced, "I'm working as hard as I can to be the last director of VISTA"—though he switched over to the Justice Department in March of this year, before the deed was done. But his replacement, Constance Horner, and the current director of ACTION, Thomas Pauken, share Burnley's determination to phase out VISTA. They are undaunted by resistance from Congress. Although last spring's VISTA reauthorization bill specified funding floors designed to thwart attempts to eliminate the program—$16 million for fiscal year 1982 (down from $30 million appropriated in 1981) and $8 million for 1983—ACTION itself came up with a reprogramming request for only $8.7 million this year and $231,000 for 1983, just enough to close VISTA down. Ideally, the Administration and the agency's leadership would like VISTA to vanish even sooner—by September 30, 1982, a year before the reauthorization legislation expires. Already the program has been cut to roughly half its former size, and the terms of the remaining 2,500 or so volunteers have been conveniently timed to expire en masse, rather than at staggered times throughout the year as usual.

The crusade to do away with VISTA clearly is not inspired by economic and policy rationales, but by simple ideological animus. Even the conservative Heritage Foundation advised a less drastic course in its blueprint for the new regime, *Mandate for Leadership* (1981). Pointing out that "VISTA is an established program with much support in Congress and the media," the report realistically concluded that "it would be far easier to change the character of VISTA than to eliminate it." However, the Reagan Administration, fired up for a fight, is more committed to destroying what it conceives to be a leftist bastion than to salvaging a federal volunteer program—though even Jim Burnley has admitted that "not all VISTA projects are confrontational in nature and based on the leftist community organizing theory. Quite a few are unobjectionable."

Certainly the standard economic profile of the pro-

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gram recited at every Congressional hearing suggests that VISTA strikes the right style for the new voluntarism vogue, which celebrates self-help and localism. Modest by almost any standard—at its height in 1980, it had a budget of $30 million, a volunteer force of 4,800—VISTA is directed by its legislation to "secure and exploit opportunities for self-advancement" among the poor. The annual cost of a VISTA volunteer, according to the program's figures, is a mere $7,800 (stipend plus training costs plus administrative expenses), and each volunteer generates an average of $24,000 in other private and public resources and recruits an average of fifteen non-VISTA volunteers. In recent years, roughly two-thirds of all VISTA volunteers have been recruited from the neighborhoods they served, half have been low-income people themselves, nearly 15 percent have been over 55 years old; they aren't the corps of white, middle-class college kids they once were. They have been assigned to local projects—some public, but many private, nonprofit organizations as well—where they work for a year, on call day and night, supported at a subsistence level. Almost three-quarters of all VISTA projects have been continued after the volunteers departed. Some ex-VISTA ventures have even been known to reap a profit, thanks to starry-eyed VISTA volunteers turned sharp-eyed entrepreneurs. In 1970, for example, a University of Iowa student named George Whyte dropped out and joined VISTA. Impressed by the handicraft skills of the women in the South Dakota region where he was sent, and "too dumb to know it couldn't be done," he set out to establish a craft business. By 1981 the employee-owned Dakotah Inc. projected $12 million in sales of quilts, bedspreads, and draperies, and had helped revive the declining rural area. The U.S. Jaycee Foundation gave Dakotah its "Uplift" award.

BUT VISTA'S opponents ignore these anecdotes and figures presented by the program's champions, and instead reflexively claim that VISTA is too expensive. ACTION's new administrators also ignore the policy guidance offered from a friendlier quarter, the Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership*. Instead of calling for an end to VISTA, the report lists ways to direct the program's policy away from its past "leftist" emphasis on organizing poor people as a group against local government and business. To set VISTA on a proper conservative course of quietly "providing services which might help individuals escape from the cycle of poverty," a Republican VISTA director should, among other things, make sure the regulations "effectively restrict VISTA volunteers from union organizing and from lobbying state and local governments and legislatures" and weigh specialized skills more than idealistic impulses in recruiting volunteers. However, even such a revised, straitlaced version of VISTA—which would, say, send volunteers out to tutor kids rather than to help organize tenant associations—is more than the current Administration wants left on its books.

So, shoving *Mandate for Leadership* to the back of their shelves, ACTION's leaders have turned to a far more hysterical Heritage Foundation feuilleton, "The New Left in Government, Part II: The VISTA Program as 'Institution-Building,'" for inspiration in their ideological campaign to end VISTA. According to the report, which dwells on conspiracy theories about Sam Brown's controversial tenure, there is "a widely held perception of VISTA as a program which, from 1977 through 1980, was captured by New Left radical activists and used to funnel government funds to organizations advocating programs and strategies basically antithetical to American political and economic usages." Sam Brown's National Grant program, designed to encourage networks among community organizing groups, is the main target of conservatives' wrath—not surprisingly: conservatives have every right, as well as respectable reasons, to think that it's inappropriate to spend *federal* money on such activist, adversarial efforts. Nonetheless, as Congress concluded in 1979, the National Grant program hardly amounted to a radical conspiracy, nor were the grantees guilty of misusing funds for agitprop, as their critics implied. Rather, Brown was exercising—provocatively perhaps—the prerogative of a new party in power. His aim was to liberalize Ford's comparatively conservative VISTA, and he accordingly gave grants to groups too activist for conservative tastes. The VISTA projects sponsored by various National Grant recipients were not outlandish socialist experiments—volunteers helped brown-lung victims, for example, and old people whose utilities had been turned off—but they did make a point of emphasizing the liberal goal of "empowering," rather than simply serving, the poor.

Beneath the polemics that have clouded VISTA's career, there is a discernible disagreement about the nature of voluntarism—a tension that has existed in the movement since its flowering in the Progressive era. The more conservative view has been that volunteers should provide direct social services to those in need; the liberal inclination has been to argue that volunteers should encourage social action by and for those in need. This "case" versus "cause" debate reflects broader differences in social outlook. Conservatives commonly envision voluntarism as a cultural undertaking, affiliated with local churches and other established civic groups, and devoted to changing attitudes, not economic or political arrangements. Liberals are more likely to see voluntarism as a fundamentally political enterprise, dedicated to promoting democratic participation among the poorest citizens and to enlightening policymakers about the role of the welfare state.

But in practice the difference usually amounts to one of emphasis. And what is perhaps most striking about views of voluntarism is the commitment shared by

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right and left to the ideas of self-help and self-reliance —and an accompanying reservation about governmental assistance. "Voluntarism is an essential part of our plan to give government back to the people," President Reagan proclaimed. "Let us go forth and say to the people: join us in helping Americans help each other." Mark Blitz of ACTION's policy planning staff elaborated this familiar Republican line: "The task now is to begin to reinforce those activities by which people in a community deal with their own problems and learn once again not to be dependent on government. . . . We're really reaching back to the America Tocqueville described, in which volunteer activity was not merely a kind of disinterested charity but a form of self-reliance." More surprising, though, is that none other than Sam Brown sounded the same note in an article he wrote on VISTA's fifteenth anniversary:

> Instead of encouraging the poor to help themselves we have told them to wait for the federal grant or the expert solution that is sure to come. Too few governmental programs reward the self-reliance of the poor. . . . We have, in short, created a system of helping that encourages the poor to be passive rather than active, dependent rather than self-reliant, recipients rather than producers, clients instead of people proud of their own work.

What's more, many conservatives and liberals alike are ready to recognize that the federal government, which has contributed to the current problem of dependency, necessarily has a part to play in the voluntaristic solution.

HOWEVER, the Reagan Administration's approach toward VISTA betrays a greater eagerness to announce what kind of government involvement in voluntarism it opposes than to outline a credible, creative approach it supports. The President claims to want to replenish that "deep and mighty river" of voluntary spirit in American communities and souls, but he and his appointees don't acknowledge that such rivers are rarely calm, quiet, or easily controlled. As Constance Horner of VISTA explains, conservatives aim to discourage an activist "form of community organizing which is designed to elicit a confrontation between poor people as a group and government or nongovernment institutions in their communities." The reason: "Such confrontations are usually designed to encourage expansion of programs, entitlements, rights which only serve to enhance dependency, not self-reliance." Some VISTA projects no doubt were "designed" to elicit such confrontations, but many more simply happened to cause some stir in the course of more straightforward service—because, as the history of American voluntarism has shown, the poor in our democratic society are likely to have to turn to their government and local institutions as well as to their selfless neighbors for help. What the Administration does support, says Horner, is "community organizing that arises as a very natural response by members of a certain community group to address a specific problem through self-help, through sharing information." Naturally VISTA, along with every sociable American, values such natural and harmonious neighborliness, and has tried to encourage such trickles of volunteer spirit where they surface.

BUT ACTION's other proposals for government sponsorship of voluntarism don't promise to deepen the river. Starting with the aggressive campaign to abolish VISTA, the agency's plans seem to be designed to avoid that "confrontational" form of organizing, not to find alternative ways to promote self-reliance among the poor. In fact, the two aims appear incompatible: avoiding confrontation seems to require downplaying the poverty focus, soft-pedaling the self-help theme, and coming up with just the sort of ineffective volunteer initiatives that deserve to be the first to get cut in hard budgetary times. ACTION touts its Vietnam Veterans Leadership program (dedicated to boosting veterans' self-images) and its Young Volunteers in ACTION program (designed to get 14 to 22-year-olds to volunteer eight hours of their time a month); but both amount to little more than superficial displays of conservative style.

Everyone, even President Reagan in a rehearsed moment, likes to quote Tocqueville when invoking the voluntarism vogue that will inspire America anew. Conservatives no doubt think fondly of the passage in *Democracy in America* about citizens gathering to build a church and found a temperance society. But perhaps they overlook Tocqueville's vision of the political agitation that such voluntaristic, civic spirit inevitably gives rise to in a democracy. "No sooner do you set foot on American soil than you find yourself in a sort of tumult; a confused clamor rises on every side, and a thousand voices are heard at once, each expressing some social requirements," Tocqueville marveled. "The great political movement which keeps American legislatures in a state of continual agitation . . . is only an episode and a sort of extension of the universal movement which begins in the lowest ranks of the people and thence spreads successively through all classes of citizens." The call to voluntarism, after all, is supposed to rouse the nation from its apathy and to inspire willful activity, especially among the lowest ranks. Not that anyone thinks undue agitation is a remedy for what ails us. It might surprise some of Marge Tabankin's enemies that she herself has acknowledged that "an overly idealistic vision is not useful. It builds expectations that can't be delivered." But a democratic vision of voluntarism is essential—and it is what has guided VISTA in its efforts to help the poor help themselves. Despite all the inspiring words, the Reagan Administration gives scant evidence of having that vision.

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How campaign money buys the good life.

THE NEW SLUSH FUND SCANDAL

BY BILL HOGAN, DIANE KIESEL, AND ALAN GREEN

SOON AFTER the November elections, when the nation's 3,300 political action committees have finished writing $80 million or so in checks earmarked for the 1982 Congressional races, the familiar cry will go up: special-interest PACs, by channeling 86 cents of every Congressional campaign dollar to incumbents, compromise the integrity of the political process.

This focus on the source of political money, however, ignores the other side of the equation: the widespread campaign *spending* abuses of House incumbents. In dozens of cases they have violated the rules of the House of Representatives, disregarded regulations of the Internal Revenue Service, and displayed contempt for the trust of their constituents and contributors. Our investigation of campaign-spending practices in the House of Representatives shows that the infamous slush fund did not die with a bygone political era. It lives on as a source of self-enrichment and personal convenience for incumbents. By taking liberties with loopholes in the election laws and the rules they have written—and police—themselves, or by simply ignoring them, some House incumbents have turned their campaign treasuries into personal expense accounts, or used them to pay expenses they are either unable or unwilling to bill to the House of Representatives.

Last year, for example, House incumbents used campaign funds for family trips to and from Hawaii, Bermuda, Europe, and China; designer dresses for their wives; expensive silver flatware for their homes; large, unexplained legal fees; tickets to the Kennedy Center, the Super Bowl, and Broadway shows; salaries for spouses and other relatives; bonus payments and cash advances to members of their Congressional staffs; custom-crafted cabinetwork and interior decoration fees for their Congressional offices; family moving expenses; home burglar-alarm systems; and even contributions to the church collection plate.

The rules of the House on the use of campaign funds are general but clear. The code of official conduct says: "A member of the House of Representatives shall keep his campaign funds separate from his personal funds. He shall convert no campaign funds to personal use in excess of reimbursement for legitimate and verifiable prior campaign expenditures and he shall expend no funds from his campaign account not attributable to bona fide campaign purposes."

Our examination of 1981 campaign spending reports filed with the Federal Election Commission by all 417 House incumbents either running for reelection or retiring, augmented by some 75 interviews, shows that outright abuse of the system is neither isolated nor inconsequential. Five years ago, following a scandal-inspired wave of public outrage, the House voted not only to rid itself of the unofficial "office accounts" that became known as slush funds, but also to confine the use of political money to legitimate campaign expenses. The reforms haven't worked.

In effect, the House has quietly created for itself a new system under which members may use their campaign treasuries as old-fashioned slush funds, often for their own financial benefit. But the widespread abuses do more than raise questions about ethical guidelines and income tax regulations: they feed, and perhaps justify, the public's cynical view of Congress as a self-indulgent institution that makes—and breaks—its own rules. Many incumbents do in fact abide by both the spirit and the letter of the House ethics code. A few even return surplus campaign funds to the original contributors. And many more can't afford a slush fund—they need every dollar they can get for legitimate campaign purposes. But the exceptions are flagrant and frequent.

No incumbent stops campaigning in a nonelection year like 1981, but many dispense with the traditional trappings of a reelection effort; substantial numbers of them have no campaign headquarters, no campaign payroll, no campaign telephone. Instead, they have a busy checkbook and a post-office box to collect money. At the end of 1981, the collective surplus of House incumbents was in excess of $23.5 million—underwritten largely by well-heeled and willing PACs.

Last year's disclosure reports show that incumbents often use their campaign reserves for purposes that have little, if anything, to do with reelection. Retiring

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Representative John Rhodes of Arizona, the former minority leader, used $11,272 in surplus campaign funds to pay for two oil portraits of himself. Democratic Representative Joseph Addabbo of New York, who won reelection in 1980 with 95 percent of the vote, drives a campaign-financed $640-a-month leased Cadillac, outfitted last year with a $456 portable television. Republican Representative Lawrence Coughlin used $2,566 in 1981 to pay part of the rent and utilities for his Pennsylvania home because, he says, he stores campaign records and equipment there.

INCUMBENTS are barred by federal law from paying relatives to serve on their Congressional staffs, but many don't hesitate to put them on the campaign payroll. Ken Holland of South Carolina, who serves on the House Ethics Committee, paid his wife $13,211 last year for campaign bookkeeping and fundraising. Former Democratic Representative George Danielson, who this year relinquished his seat in the House for a California judgeship, paid his wife $15,600 last year to serve as his campaign manager. Mrs. Danielson, however, may not have been up to the task: late in 1981 the Congressman paid a consultant $7,200 to reorganize the entire campaign office and its records. Democratic Representative Robert Roe of New Jersey paid his brother $2,500 in consulting fees.

Congressional staff members frequently find it lucrative to moonlight as campaign workers. Republican Representative Carl Pursell of Michigan paid his $38,000-a-year press secretary, William Kerans, a $5,000 fee for "independent contractor services." Representative Guy Vander Jagt of Michigan, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, paid James Sparling Jr., a staff aide, a $10,000 fee for political consulting and organizing work. Republican Representative Hal Daub of Nebraska, meanwhile, paid $8,250 out of campaign funds to eight staff members, including $5,000 to his administrative assistant, for what Daub's reports list as "campaign win bonuses."

Some incumbents have seen to it that campaign funds follow a circuitous, even if legal, route back into their own pockets. When Republican Representative Gene Taylor of Missouri leased a campaign car in 1981, checks worth $4,885 were paid to his own auto dealership, which his House financial disclosure report lists as an "inactive business" and which an aide says ceased operation in mid-1980. Republican Representative Benjamin Gilman in 1981 paid himself $290 per month in rent for his campaign headquarters, which is on the first floor of his upstate New York home.

The slush-fund scam is one of Capitol Hill's dirtiest little secrets. For years, press and public watchdogs have focused on how Congressional incumbents raise money, but have virtually ignored the questionable, often disgraceful, ways in which many spend it. As a result, even the worst abusers have been spared the kind of public indignation that greeted Nancy Reagan's acceptance of free designer dresses or Richard Allen's acceptance of free wristwatches. These were minor indiscretions compared to some of the practices perfected by House incumbents, many of which exceed those of the man who, in 1952, made the phrase "slush fund" famous: it was an $18,235 secret slush fund that almost put an end to Richard Nixon's political career, forcing him to go on national television to proclaim, for the first time, that he was not a crook.

Congressional incumbents these days are much more fortunate. Beyond dreadfully inadequate disclosure laws, there is virtually no accountability for how they spend campaign funds. For example, the campaign of Republican Representative John Paul Hammerschmidt of Arkansas paid a Hot Springs law firm $7,000 in 1981 and another $13,000 in the first three months of 1982, with the costs alternately justified as "retainers" and "professional fees." When asked for an explanation, campaign treasurer Pamela Wehner replied: "I don't know that I'm obliged to elaborate on that." The campaign committee of Democratic Representative John Murtha of Pennsylvania engaged Washington attorney Walter J. Bonner in 1981 for $12,000 worth of legal services. Murtha was investigated by the FBI in the early stages of Abscam, but was never charged with any wrongdoing, and later decided to testify against two House colleagues facing Abscam charges. Were the legal fees in connection with Murtha's reelection campaign, Abscam, or some other matter? Murtha's office will not say.

SECRECY and subterfuge should have no place in the post-Watergate era of campaign financing. But the wide-ranging reforms inspired by that scandal have only replaced the absence of accountability with the illusion of accountability.

The campaign waged by Representative Robert Badham, a politically secure third-term Republican from Newport Beach, California, provides ample proof that slush funds still survive in the House. Badham's campaign committee spent more than $15,000 at travel agencies last year, principally for his wife's airline trips between Washington and California. The Badhams also took a $5,596 junket to Germany, paid for with $4,488 in campaign funds and further subsidized by $1,108 from the Heritage Foundation. When Badham, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, took a taxpayer-financed swing through Bermuda and Panama, his wife's travel was free, but the campaign paid $270 for her in-flight meals and other expenses. In the 1979-1980 season, the campaign paid the following expenses incurred during Badham's "official trips": $234 toward his wife's expenses on a tour of the Far East; $227 for his wife's meals on flights to and from Africa; a rental car in Europe; and $300 for house-sitters. Badham says the purpose of all these trips, and the justification for billing expenses associated with them to his campaign, is "to enhance my and

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our visibility at home as being knowledgeable on things that make the government go."

Badham is by no means poor. On House financial disclosure reports, he lists assets (excluding the value of personal residences) of at least $128,000. Yet Badham last year had his campaign committee buy three dresses for his wife—two from West Coast boutiques ($376 and $583) and one from Saks Fifth Avenue ($508)—and pay for at least $283 in dry cleaning at the Progressive Cleaners in Arlington, Virginia. There's also the campaign cutlery, a $403 set of silver flatware that Badham's reports say is for "official entertainment" at his Arlington home. In addition, Badham billed the campaign in 1981 for nearly $11,000 in expenses charged to his MasterCard, but his reports provide no breakdown for four-fifths of it.

Are there things, in Badham's view, that incumbents should not do with campaign funds? "Well, that's a big question, and I really wouldn't know how to answer it," he says. "Outright conversion while one is in office is illegal, as I understand it. And outside of that, any legitimate campaign expense is legitimate, by definition. When you come right down to it—when you look at my election record and you look at the amount that is spent from campaign funds for what I think are campaign activities for the way I campaign—actually my expenditures are somewhat modest."

CAMPAIGN treasuries fall within a specialized and intricate niche of federal tax law, a niche that some incumbents, to avoid personal tax liability, have conveniently ignored. To maintain tax-exempt status, campaign funds must be spent to influence—or to try to influence—a candidate's nomination or election to public office, as well as to pay for the overhead, record-keeping, and fundraising expenses associated with the campaign. They also may be contributed to other political committees or to nonprofit charitable groups without creating tax liability.

But once campaign money is used for other purposes—to buy oil paintings, for example—the IRS considers it, at a minimum, taxable income to the campaign committee. If these diversions of funds are more than insubstantial, and it is determined that the reelection committee no longer operates primarily for campaign purposes, the committee's tax-exempt status can be challenged. And if an incumbent's political funds are commingled with personal funds or otherwise diverted from campaign use for his benefit—to defray his office expenses, for example, or to pay for dresses, dry cleaning, and vacations—the IRS calls the money taxable income to the Congressman. Yet Badham, for example, says he did not declare any of his campaign purchases as income for tax purposes.

IRS regulations treat surplus campaign funds even more strictly. Unless they are transferred within a "reasonable period of time" to another political organization or charitable group, or are "held in reasonable anticipation" of being spent to influence future elections, the IRS treats the money "as expended for the personal use of the person having control over the ultimate use of such funds"—namely, the candidate.

Members of the House have become a small but distinguished section of America's underground economy. When John Rhodes used campaign funds to buy a $2,000 lifetime membership in the Phoenix Press Club, he may have received income—whether he thought of it in that way or not—because, in the words of IRS regulations, "a direct or indirect financial benefit" accrued to him. Similar questions would seem to arise in the case of Democratic Representative Phillip Burton of California, who spent $11,609 in campaign funds last year for lodging expenses at San Francisco's Sir Francis Drake Hotel. Burton says he gave up his district apartment because he could no longer afford it.

REPUBLICAN Representative Bill Lowery of California used $4,051 in leftover campaign funds to pay for his family's transcontinental moving costs. But Lowery amended his 1981 personal tax return to reflect the amount as additional income after our inquiries. Republican Representative Mick Staton of West Virginia and Democratic Representative Charles Hatcher of Georgia also used thousands of dollars in campaign funds to pay family moving expenses.

Other cases might require a little digging by IRS auditors. Democratic Representative Gus Yatron of Pennsylvania, for example, used campaign funds to outfit his headquarters with a $3,057 security system. He did not consider it taxable income. Neither would anyone else—without knowing that Yatron's campaign headquarters is in his Reading home, a fact not apparent from his campaign-spending reports.

There is virtually nothing that some House members deem inappropriate as campaign expenses, particularly if couched in such vague phrases as "constituent courtesy" or "supporter planning." In some cases, incumbents seem to define bona fide campaign purposes as expenses they either are unable to charge to the House or unwilling to pay out of their own pockets. And while members ceremoniously debate the merits of increased tax breaks for themselves, they continue to disregard the fiscal flimflam of their colleagues. Democrat Sam Hall Jr. of Texas, for example, whose personal financial statement filed with the House clerk shows at least $1.6 million in assets last year, ran up $12,696 in American Express bills in 1981 for "campaign" meals, travel, gifts, and entertainment, much of it in Washington and some in Hong Kong. Other expenses charged to his campaign included a $384 stereo cassette player from Sears, so, his reports claim, he could "learn to speak Spanish," and $245 in wedding gifts for the daughters of two Congressional colleagues. Hall's expensive politicking was done without an office, a telephone, a staff—or even, in the last election, an opponent.

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Democratic Representative Charles Rangel of New York used $1,537 in campaign funds to fly himself and his wife to Hawaii for a speaking engagement; while there, he charged another $245 in "entertainment." Democratic Representative Leon Panetta of California spent $758 from his campaign treasury for air fare to Las Vegas. But the most expansive electioneering philosophy is espoused by Democratic Representative Mervyn Dymally of California, who says no corner of the globe is off-limits to his campaign: "Wherever the cause calls us," he says. He took one campaign-funded trip to Singapore, and says he may go to Grenada before the year is out. "It relates to my conscience and to my responsibilities as a fighter for world peace and my own perception of how I see my role," Dymally says. "I do not see my role in the confines of the geographical boundaries of the district. I see myself as a third world person."

House leaders probably cannot be expected to rein in their colleagues, because in some cases they have been raiding their own reelection reservoirs. Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, tapped his $391,000 campaign treasury to pick up the $2,309 tab for the committee's annual Christmas party. Trent Lott of Mississippi, the House Republican whip, used more than $7,150 in campaign money for celebrating President Reagan's inauguration. House Minority Leader Robert Michel of Illinois charged a $716 round-trip airline ticket to Tampa last November "for campaign photos." In the case of House Democratic Caucus Chairman Gillis Long of Louisiana, who ran unopposed in the last election, and who had amassed more than half a million dollars by the end of 1981, there is little to suggest that his $95,000 in campaign spending (which included no office or payroll) was in any way calculated to prepare for a real reelection battle. His media budget was $100, and his office supplies cost $8.15. Long's biggest expense was $11,405 for a new car, plus $5,195 for auto insurance, maintenance, and gasoline.

IN SHORT, there are no boundaries for some incumbents: all spending is presumably "political." Democrat Cecil Heftel of Hawaii shelled out $1,577 in campaign funds last year for macadamia nuts to give as birthday presents to House colleagues. And Gillis Long's campaign committee spent $111 for a "staff function" in the clubhouse of a West Virginia racetrack.

Members often sweepingly attribute their expenses to activities on behalf of those they represent, running up thousands of dollars in the House dining room, which they write off to constituent lunches. Or they spend hundreds of dollars on unspecified gifts, and explain it away as presents for constituents. Democratic Representative Bill Nichols of Alabama and his wife used $735 in campaign funds for what he listed as "constituent services": expenses associated with Washington house guests. Nichols's invoice included $200 for food and meals at home, $100 for a maid and a cook, $80 for theater tickets, and $180 for "mileage for sightseeing" at 30 cents a mile.

Campaign-spending reports for House incumbents show other patterns of seemingly questionable financial activity. Some incumbents (Democratic Representatives Mervyn Dymally of California and Parren Mitchell of Maryland, for example) used campaign funds last year to make personal loans to members of their Congressional staffs. Other incumbents collected sizable interest payments on personal funds they loaned to their campaign committees, at rates ranging up to 18 percent. Some House incumbents routinely use their campaign treasuries to maintain petty-cash drawers in their Congressional offices; Republican Representative Paul Findley of Illinois, for example, listed nearly $2,700 in disbursements last year for petty cash in his Washington and Springfield offices. Even though House rules explicitly forbid members from receiving advances from their campaign funds, some, like Democratic Representative Richard Shelby of Alabama, list exactly that on disclosure reports.

DISCLOSURE can become a virtually impenetrable game of hide-and-seek. A compelling example of ineffective disclosure emerges from a review of the campaign-spending practices of Republican John Erlenborn of Illinois, now running for his tenth term. More than 42 percent of the Erlenborn for Congress Committee's operating expenditures in 1981 ($19,941) went, in 40 separate transactions, to a Naperville, Illinois, advertising-specialty firm called Attention! Inc. The Erlenborn committee paid the firm for everything from buttons and bumper stickers (which the company orders, not manufactures) to office rent, a telephone answering service, a coffeemaker, and fundraising management. The company also received $516 in federal funds from the House last year by selling Erlenborn's office "congressional labels," "congressional stick 'em notes," and essay-contest certificates.

What Erlenborn's campaign-spending reports do not reveal is that the president of Attention! Inc. is Joanne D. Maxwell, his $45,000-a-year executive assistant. Erlenborn says the public's right to know hasn't been compromised. "If you order from any corporation, you only have the name of the corporation," he says, "unless you dig behind it to see who the officers and stockholders are." Erlenborn says that, other than Maxwell, neither he nor any of his family or staff has profited from a relationship with Attention! Inc.

The reelection committee of millionaire Democratic Representative Glenn Anderson of California rented a $135-a-month headquarters in 1981 from "Downtown Enterprises" in Hawthorne, California. Anderson is president of the firm. The committee also spent $2,622 last year for "campaign manager travel." Though it is impossible to tell from the reports, the campaign manager is Anderson's wife. Tucked away among $9,256 in

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air fares charged in 1981 to the campaign committee of Democratic Representative Kent Hance of Texas was one $1,887 payment to Pan Am airlines. Reviewers of the committee's report would not know that the payment enabled the Hances to fly back home from China. The couple had been part of a White House contingent touring the country, but an aide says they left early so he could get back to the House floor to cast votes.

SOME HOUSE incumbents, like Republican Representative Bud Shuster of Pennsylvania, show both contempt for the system and little respect for their contributors or the public. Shuster's 1981 campaign spending reports frequently contain scant information about where the money goes: he received $24,321 in reimbursements, $12,362 of which was listed in his reports as "repayment of advancement for public relations"; the balance was written off to unspecified travel, food, lodging, and meeting expenses. Shuster says his campaign reports speak for themselves, and he refuses to answer any questions about them. Republican Matthew Rinaldo of New Jersey shares that attitude. He billed his campaign for more than $2,400 in American Express charges last year, listing them only as unitemized "entertainment and meeting expenses"; the campaign paid another $2,678 for "meeting expenses" at the Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, New Jersey, and $288 at the Giants football stadium for "fundraising activity." Rinaldo's press secretary says: "He has no comment. He feels they're self-explanatory and they're all legitimate."

Under the Federal Election Campaign Act, Congressional candidates may spend the money they raise for *any* lawful purpose except personal use. But through an amendment signed into law on January 8, 1980, House incumbents serving at the time were clever enough to "grandfather" themselves out of the law's antipocketing provision. (While House rules prohibit conversion of campaign funds to personal use, these incumbents can take the money with them on retirement.) This means that 360 or so House incumbents may spend campaign money as they please—even, say, for a pleasure cruise—and never have to worry about FEC scrutiny. And since House rules do not define "bona fide campaign purposes," members do their own defining. Thus, a "campaign purpose" can mean anything from five-dollar church mass cards (Democrat Robert Young of Missouri) to country club dues (Republican Joseph McDade of Pennsylvania) to a lifetime membership in the American Airlines Admiral Club (retiring Republican Clair Burgener of California).

House rules are more stringent about defraying the expenses—or even supporting the activities—of Congressional offices: only official allowances or personal funds may be used for those purposes. The blanket prohibition was adopted in 1977 ethics-code revisions that abolished unofficial office accounts—"slush funds"—on the theory that private money, including campaign contributions, should not be used to support the official and representational expenses of incumbents. Democrat David Obey of Wisconsin said at the time that the rule was intended "to build a wall between official expenses on the one hand and personal and political expenses on the other."

In the five years since, the "wall" has become little more than a smoke screen. Last year, for example, Democrat Doug Barnard Jr. of Georgia used $5,370 in campaign funds to pay interior-decorator fees and buy draperies for his Congressional district office. The expenditures violated House rules, and disclosure reports for 1981 are replete with other examples of House incumbents using campaign funds to support the activities or defray the expenses of running their Congressional offices: everything from soft drinks and coffee for staff and constituents to picture-framing and office furniture to television sets and video cassette recorders. Incumbents almost universally offer a simple rationale: they don't want to soak the taxpayers for these kinds of expenses. Instead, they soak their campaign contributors.

JUDGING ONE'S peers as a member of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct is an unenviable assignment. Representative Ken Holland, a committee member, notes that the House rules on campaign funds and official allowances are a vast gray area, and the committee's leadership does not seem inclined to clear up any of the murkiness. Chairman Louis Stokes of Ohio refuses even to discuss the ethics code (or, for that matter, his own campaign reports), as do the committee's professional staff members.

Representative David Obey, who headed the commission charged with recommending changes in the House ethics code, says: "I got so goddamned sick of that issue that I was delighted to shovel it out of my head. We didn't give two hoots in hell what members spend their campaign money on. That was not our interest." Republican Bill Frenzel of Minnesota, who was the ranking minority member of the Obey Commission, is one of the few incumbents who supports random audits of campaign committees. "It seems to me that if you use campaign funds for the same purposes as you used slush funds before," he says, "that is certainly questionable use."

With so many incumbents ignoring the House rules with impunity and benefiting from the laxity in federal election laws, it is unlikely there will be much impetus from within to reform the system. And as the campaign treasuries of incumbents grow fatter, so will the potential for abuse. Over the last five years, the attention of those who seek to clean up campaign financing has zeroed in on the dangers of special-interest PACs, but slush funds in the House of Representatives may pose an even greater threat to the integrity of the institution.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Garp's World and Others

In the title poem of his book *The Lost Pilot*, James Tate writes about his father who was killed in World War II without ever seeing his son:

> I feel as if I were
> the residue of a stranger's life,
> that I should pursue you.
>
> My head cocked toward the sky,
> I cannot get off the ground. . . .

Whether or not George Roy Hill and Steve Tesich know the Tate poem, Hill,

The World According to Garp
(Warner Brothers)

Birgit Haas Must Be Killed
(Frank Moreno Company)

Demon Pond
(Kino International)

the director and co-producer, and Tesich, the screenwriter, have made Tate's feelings part of their film of John Irving's novel *The World According to Garp*. The picture begins with the infant son of the dead tail-gunner being tossed into the sky; it ends with the grown Garp dying in the sky, in an ambulance helicopter, and then there's a repeat of the opening infant shot.

This is one of several attempts by Hill and his colleague Tesich to evolve patterns from the novel and to underscore ones that already exist in the book. Examples: Garp's college girl friend, Helen, sees another girl practicing fellatio on him; later, years after Helen and Garp are married, his car accidentally rams another car in which she is practicing fellatio on a student of hers. Early in the film, a sniper is shot out of a tree before he can shoot Garp's mother at a public meeting; later, another sniper gets her; still later, Garp is shot—by the vindictive sister of the first girl who fellated Garp.

Hill clings very hard to these patterns. The ones that he took from the novel he highlights as Irving didn't need to. Because the acute Hill was aware of the problems he faced in filming *Garp*, he apparently thought that this emphasis on designs might bind the picture together. I respect his foreknowledge of the problems and his refusal to be deterred: I wish I could add that he overcame the problems, but he has only demonstrated again an aesthetic difference between novels—some novels, anyway—and films.

I'm not about to make a checklist of the differences between Irving's book and this film. (Only one omission, unavoidable, is germane: with the novel, the reader could read Garp's short stories; with the film, we can only look at the manuscripts. Thus Garp's successful writing career is harder to believe in the film.) Hill's basic trouble was not that he was dealing with a first-class novel—I don't think Irving's book is anything like first class—but that, if Irving achieved anything, it was the creation of his novel *in its prose*. And that prose is deliberately paradoxical: it uses brisk, vigorous, good humor to deal with lives that entail the grotesque and horrible. In the book, those horrors influence the hero's cheer as little as they do the prose he lives in. That paradoxical prose gives the book its tone, a combination of a civilian *Catch-22* with a macabre *Candide*. And it's that prose, that nearly literal *body* of the work, for which Hill has not found a cinematic equivalent. In his film, the materials he has taken from the book are like several kinds of fish, which were lively and colorful in a huge tank, hauled out and plunked into a small aquarium where they have difficulty in moving, even surviving.

Or, to change figures, it's as if Hill had filmed bits of an opera libretto, omitting the score. Without the score, the bits are unfulfilled and disconnected. In one vein we have Garp, the relatively normal man, loving his wife and his two children, dealing realistically with troubles and pleasures. In another vein, blackly farcical and unrealistic, we see a light plane crash into the house that Garp and Helen are inspecting, the pilot's emergence to ask whether he may use the phone, and Garp's immediate decision to buy the wrecked house because lightning never strikes twice; we see a crazy van driver who races recklessly through a residential neighborhood and who, after reproof, chases Garp and a friend over lawns and through fences, then drives off. In the novel, the prose itself enveloped these opposed veins; in the film, they jangle loosely against each other.

The result is that we never quite know how to react to the film. Some sequences are well directed—such as the courtship scenes in the empty college bleachers or the interweavings of reminiscence and fantasy—and some roles are well acted. But we never know who Garp himself is, in relation to us. With Irving, it was the novel *itself* that we reacted to; with the film, we need a vicar, and Garp doesn't satisfy. *Is* he a doomed Candide? Or a symbol of human resistance to reality? Or an instance of the capriciousness of fate? ("As flies to wanton boys . . . ," etc.) All of these things, and more, can be true of any one life, of course, which may be part of Irving's point—to contain life's erran-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

E. T., The Extra-Terrestrial. More homely heart-tugs than interstellar transcendence, but Steven Spielberg's film about a wee creature from Outer Space and three American kids has goodly good moments.

Lola. Not a remake of *The Blue Angel* but a spin-off, directed by Fassbinder in Movieland mode and excellently acted.

A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy. Woody Allen's turn-of-the-century country-weekend plot is bearably pleasant and pleasantly forgettable.

Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl. Monty Python live anywhere is (are?) a treat. This bill of excerpts from a stage performance is better than the last such—it has no guest musicians.

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cies in a constancy, his consistent prose. In the film, all we can do is laugh at the funny stuff, be moved by the family stuff, be shocked by the horrible stuff, one discrete bit after another.

Hill gets the best performances I've seen from Mary Beth Hurt, as Helen, and Glenn Close, as Garp's mother; still, it was an aural mistake to cast these two women in the same film. Not only are their voices alike, they're tinny. John Lithgow has an actor's-dream part of the transsexualized football player, and he respects it, instead of camping it. Swoosie Kurtz takes another step in her career of hookers and sex fiends. In a very brief appearance, Amanda Plummer has fine intensity. (Perhaps she's so good because she's mute. *Her* voice, too —and her father agrees—needs much work.) Robin Williams, who is amusingly frenetic as a stand-up comic, is a nonperson as a straight actor. He just doesn't seem to exist, to *be* there. Since he doesn't correspond to, or suggest, experience, it's hard to respond to him as Garp. I can't say Williams is wrong for the role—he's not real enough to be right *or* wrong—but his vagueness as a being doesn't give much of a center to a film that sorely needs one.

Most political thrillers these days have two ambitions: to thrill and to Mean Something. Few succeed in the first, fewer in both. A French job, *Birgit Haas Must Be Killed*, hits the double bull's-eye.

Obviously there's an inherent difficulty in saying how and why. I can't disclose much because surprise is essential to the film's enjoyment. I can say, since we know it from the start, that Birgit Haas is a German political terrorist who is highly susceptible to men. But about the double ironies at the end, I can say only that one character is reborn by putting life right on the line; another's life is spared, but the escape means a return to a life that was no longer wanted.

From the first moment, the pace is quick and smooth, a kind of silky suspense. The film starts—again!—with a photograph of the wanted person, as we hear suave Frenchmen discuss her. She is active in Germany, yet the Germans have invited French agents to dispose of her. (The reasons, connected with French arms sales to Germany, would only further inflame the terrorists if they knew.) A complex plan is set in motion so that Haas, whose nymphomania is notorious, can seem to have been killed in a crime of passion, not politics: thus terrorist vengeance will be averted.

The characterizations, all along the line, help the suspense: we're held because we believe the people. Most of them are well done at the thriller level: a few go deeper. And the dialogue, as conveyed in subtitles, has some pungency. (There's even an "in" joke. One secret agent, carrying another, says, "He's not heavy. He's my brother." Remember *Boys' Town*?)

The good script has been given to a generally classy cast. Philippe Noiret and Jean Rochefort, who were the stricken father and the sympathetic detective in Tavernier's *The Clockmaker*, are together again in roles that are here, to a degree, reversed. Noiret always has the ability to take a good-enough role and touch it with depth, not with superficial decor. Rochefort, whose career shows a wider range than Noiret's, including farce, unfailingly rises to an occasion. Here his character calls for credible despair, a genuine inner abyss: Rochefort understands it and creates it. Simple, right? Bernard Le Coq, who was impressive in *The Arrest* (TNR, May 5), has a less complex role here but is razor-sharp in it. My one casting quibble is with Lisa Kreuzer as Haas. Kreuzer is competent, not much more. I couldn't quite believe the differing passions that are supposed to be in her. And I couldn't help comparing her with Barbara Sukowa, the terrorist in *Marianne and Juliane*. Kreuzer isn't in it with Sukowa, in any way.

The director, Laurent Heynemann, and two collaborators adapted the screenplay from a novel by Guy Teissere. Heynemann's record includes work as assistant to Tavernier on both *The Clockmaker* and *Let Joy Reign Supreme*. This thriller is Heynemann's third film, the first I've seen, and I hope that its success—intrinsically, anyway—won't limit him to thrillers.

A Japanese film, *Demon Pond* by Masahiro Shinoda, is not much good but is nonetheless a milestone for me. The story has two strands, modern and legendary. (A present-day science teacher from Kyoto, on holiday in the country, gets involved in a legend. The present-day story has a touch of *Woman*

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in the Dunes: the legendary elements have touches of clumsiness.) The young woman in the modern story and the princess in the legend are both played by one *man*, Tamasaburo Bando. I had never seen a man play a woman in films. I don't mean plot complications that make a man put on women's clothes or even an entire drag performance. This is a man whose profession is playing women truthfully, and he is wonderful.

Tamasaburo—a Kabuki actor, therefore known by his first name—is a leading *onnagata*, performer of women's roles in the all-male Kabuki theater. Shortly after I saw *Demon Pond*, I saw Tamasaburo in two evenings with the Grand Kabuki in New York. It was all the more fascinating to watch him, through the stylized formalities of Kabuki, achieve the same grace and loveliness that he had shown in this relatively realistic film. An extraordinary artist.

A reading of Sophocles's tragedy.

The Freedom Of Oedipus

By Bernard Knox

'OEDIPUS THE KING' is universally recognized as the dramatic masterpiece of the Greek theater. Aristotle cites it as the most brilliant example of theatrical plot, the model for all to follow, and all the generations since who have seen it staged—no matter how inadequate the production or how poor the translation—have agreed with his assessment as they found themselves moved to pity and fear by the swift development of its ferociously logical plot. The story of Oedipus, the myth, was of course very old in Sophocles's time and very well known to his audience. It was his use of the well-known material that made the play new. He chose to concentrate attention not on the actions of Oedipus that had made his name a byword—his violation of the two most formidable taboos observed by almost every human society—but on the moment of his discovery of the truth. And Sophocles engineered this discovery not by divine agency (as Homer did) and not by chance, but through the persistent, courageous action of Oedipus himself. The hero of the play is thus his own destroyer; he is the detective who tracks down and identifies the criminal—who turns out to be himself.

The play has also been almost universally regarded as the classic example of the "tragedy of fate." To the rationalist critics of the eighteenth century and still more to the firm believers in human progress of the nineteenth, this aspect of the play was a historical curiosity, to be discounted; but our own more anxious age has seen in the situation of Oedipus an image of its own fears. In the very first year of our century Sigmund Freud in his *Interpretation of Dreams* offered a famous and influential interpretation of the destiny of Oedipus the King:

> There must be something which makes a voice within us ready to recognize the compelling force of destiny in the *Oedipus*, while we can dismiss as merely arbitrary such dispositions as are laid down in . . . modern tragedies of destiny. And a factor of this kind is in fact involved in the story of King Oedipus. His destiny moves us only because it might have been ours. . . . It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and . . . murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that this is so.

This passage is of course a landmark in the history of modern thought, and it is fascinating to observe that this idea, which, valid or not, has had enormous influence, stems from an attempt to answer a literary problem—why does the play have this overpowering effect on modern audiences?—and that this problem is raised by an ancient Greek tragedy. As a piece of literary criticism, however, it leaves much to be desired. If the effect of the play did indeed depend on the "particular nature of the material," then one would expect modern audiences to be just as deeply moved by a performance of Voltaire's *Edipe*, whereas, in fact, the play is rarely produced, and then only as a museum piece. At any rate, though the primordial urges and fears that are Freud's concern are perhaps inherent in the myths, they are not exploited in the Sophoclean play. And indeed Freud himself, in a later passage in the same work, admits as much: "the further modification of the legend," he says, "originates . . . in a misconceived secondary revision of the material, which has sought to exploit it for theological purposes." This "further modification" is the Sophoclean play.

Sophocles's play has served modern man and his haunted sense of being caught in a trap not only as a base for a psychoanalytic theory that dooms the male infant to guilt and anxiety from his mother's breast, but also as the model for a modern drama that presents to us, using the ancient figures, our own terror of the unknown future that we fear we cannot control—our deep fear that every step we take forward on what we think is the road of progress may really be a step toward a foreordained rendezvous with disaster. The greatest of these modern versions is undoubtedly Jean Cocteau's *Machine Infernale*; the title alone is, as the French say, a whole program. Cocteau also worked with Stravinsky on an operatic version of the Sophoclean play (the text in liturgical Latin), and for a recording of this work he wrote a prologue that sums up his compelling vision of man's place in a strange and haunted universe. "*Spectateurs*," says the author in his forceful, rather nasal voice, "*sans le savoir* . . . without knowing it, Oedipus is at grips with the powers that watch us from the other side of death. They have spread for him, since the day of his birth, a trap and you are going to watch it snap shut." This is of course much more explicit (and much more despairing) than the Sophoclean play; it stems, like the beautiful and terrifying second act of the *Machine Infernale*, in which the Sphinx and Anubis play their fiend-

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ish game with Oedipus, out of a modern vision of a death-haunted universe, from the obsessed imagination that gives us also, in the film *Orphée*, the unforgettable images of Death at work: her black-uniformed motorcyclists, enigmatic radio messages, and rubber gloves.

PARALLEL WITH THIS modern adaptation of the Oedipus story, serving new psychologies and mythologies of the irrational, goes a reinterpretation of the Sophoclean play itself by scholars and critics. Yeats, who translated the play for production at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, described his reaction to a rehearsal in the words, "I had but one overwhelming emotion, a sense as of the actual presence in a terrible sacrament of the god." Taking his cue from the work of Frazer and Harrison, who emphasize the religious, tribal, and primitive aspects of the Greek tradition, Francis Fergusson, in his brilliant book *The Idea of a Theater*, gives us a vision of the Sophoclean masterpiece as an Athenian mystery play, a solemn rite of sacrifice that purges the community of its collective guilt by punishing a scapegoat, one man who perishes for the good of the people.

All this is a reaction, predictable and perhaps even necessary, against the nineteenth-century worship of the Greek rational "enlightenment"—a vision of ancient Greece dear to the hearts of optimistic Victorians who found in Greece, as each successive generation in the West has done since the Renaissance, their own image. But the reaction toward the mysterious, the irrational has gone too far. For Sophocles's play, read without preconceptions of any kind, gives an entirely different impression. There is not one supernatural event in it, no gods (as there are in so many other Greek plays), no monsters —nothing that is not, given the mythical situation, inexorably logical and human. Destiny, fate, and the will of the gods do indeed loom ominously behind the human action, but that action, far from suggesting primeval rituals and satanic divinities, reflects, at every point, contemporary realities familiar to the audience that first saw the play.

The voice of destiny in the play is the oracle of Apollo. Through his priests at Delphi, Apollo told Laius that he would be killed by his own son, and later told Oedipus that he would kill his father and marry his mother. At the beginning of the play Apollo tells Creon that Thebes will be saved from the plague only when the murderer of Laius is found and expelled. This Delphic oracle, which for modern poets—Yeats, for example—can conjure up mystic romantic visions, was, for Sophocles and his audience, a fact of life, an institution as present and solid, as uncompromising (and sometimes infuriating) as the Vatican is for us. States and individuals alike consulted it as a matter of course about important decisions. Sparta asked Apollo if it should declare war on Athens in 431 B.C. (it was told to go ahead and was promised victory). The oracle promoted revolutions, upheld dynasties, guided the foundation of colonies. Its wealth and political influence were immense.

Its power was based on a widespread, indeed in early times universal, belief in the efficacy of divine prophecy. The gods knew everything, including what was going to happen, and so their advice was precious; the most famous dispenser of such advice was Apollo, son of Zeus. Private individuals and official representatives of state had for centuries made the journey by land and sea to Apollo's temple in its magnificent setting on a high plateau below Mount Parnassus; in gratitude for the god's advice, kings and cities had lavished gifts on the sanctuary and even built treasuries on the site to house their precious offerings.

But in the second half of the fifth century B.C., particularly in Athens, this belief in prophecy and with it belief in the religious tradition as a whole was under attack. Philosophers and sophists (the new professional teachers of rhetoric, political theory, and a host of allied subjects) were examining all accepted ideas with a critical eye: the fifth century in Athens was an age of intellectual revolution. Among the younger intellectuals, prophecies, especially those peddled by self-appointed professional seers (a class of operator common in ancient Greece but not unknown in modern America), were viewed with skepticism if not scorn; inevitably some of the skepticism spread to embrace the more respectable oracular establishments that claimed to transmit divine instructions. Thucydi-

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des, the historian of the Peloponnesian War, dismissed prophecy contemptuously in a couple of cynical sentences, and Euripides attacked it, sometimes lightheartedly, sometimes bitterly, in one play after another. The philosophical attack on it was more radical; the dictum of the sophist Protagoras—"the individual man is the measure of all things, of the existence of what exists and the nonexistence of what does not"—subjected prophecy, and for that matter the gods themselves, to a harsh criterion that found them wanting.

WHEN HE CHOSE as the subject of his tragedy a story about a man who tried to avoid the fulfillment of a prophecy of Apollo, believed he had succeeded and cast scorn on all the oracles, only to find that he had fulfilled that prophecy long ago, Sophocles was dealing with matters that had urgent contemporary significance; prophecy was one of the great controversial questions of the day. It was in fact the key question, for the rationalist critique of the whole archaic religious tradition had concentrated its fire on this particular sector. Far more than prophecy was involved. For if the case for divine foreknowledge could be successfully demolished, the whole traditional religious edifice went down with it. If the gods did not know the future, they did not know any more than man. These are in fact the terms of the Sophoclean play. When the chorus hears Jocasta dismiss divine prophecy and Oedipus agree with her, they actually pray to Zeus to fulfill the dreadful prophecies they have just heard Jocasta and Oedipus report. They identify prophecy with the very existence of the gods. Never again, they say, will they go reverent to Delphi or to any oracular shrine of the gods

> unless these prophecies all come true
> for all mankind to point toward in
> wonder. . . .
> They are dying, the old oracles sent to
> Laius,
> now our masters strike them off the rolls.
> Nowhere Apollo's golden glory now—
> the gods, the gods go down.

By this emphasis Sophocles gave the age-old story contemporary and controversial significance, and he had other ways besides to make his audience see themselves in the ancient figures he brought to such disturbing life on stage. The play opens, for example, with a citizen delegation begging a ruler for relief from plague. The Athenians were all too familiar with plague; in the second summer of the war, in a city overcrowded with refugees from the Spartan invasion of Attica, plague had raged in the city, and it had recurred over the next three or four years.

But more important for the play's impact on the audience than this grim setting is the characterization of the play's central figure, Oedipus the King. The poet's language presents him to the audience not as a figure of the mythical past but as one fully contemporary; in fact he is easily recognizable as an epitome of the Athenian character as they themselves conceived it and as their enemies saw it too. One trait after another in the character of Sophocles's Oedipus corresponds to Athenian qualities praised by Pericles in his Funeral Speech or denounced by the Corinthians in their attack on Athenian imperialism at the congress in Sparta before the war.

OEDIPUS IS QUICK to decide and to act; he anticipates advice and suggestion. When the priest hints that he should send to Delphi for help, he has already done so; when the chorus suggests sending for Tiresias, the prophet has already been summoned and is on the way. This swiftness in action is a well-known Athenian quality, one their enemies are well aware of. "They are the only people," say the Corinthians, "who simultaneously hope for and have what they plan, because of their quick fulfillment of decisions." But this action is not rash, it is based on reflection; Oedipus reached the decision to apply to Delphi "groping, laboring over many paths of thought." This too is typically Athenian. "We are unique," says Pericles, "in our combination of the most courageous action and rational discussion of our plans." The Athenians also spoke with pride of the intelligence that informed such discussion: Pericles attributes the Athenian victories over the Persians "not to luck, but to intelligence." And this is the claim of Oedipus, too. "The flight of my own intelligence hit the mark," he says, as he recalls his solution of the riddle of the Sphinx. The riddle has sinister verbal connections with his fate (his name in Greek is *Oidipous*, and *dipous* is the Greek word for "two-footed" in the riddle, not to mention the later prophecy of Tiresias that he would leave Thebes as a blind man, "a stick tapping before him step by step"), but the answer he proposed to the riddle—"Man"—is appropriate for the optimistic picture of man's achievement and potential that the figure of Oedipus represents.

Above all, as we see from the priest's speech in the prologue and the prompt, energetic action Oedipus takes to rescue his subjects from the plague, he is a man dedicated to the interests and the needs of the city. It is this public spirit that drives him on to the discovery of the truth—to reject Creon's hint that the matter should be kept under wraps, to send for Tiresias, to pronounce the curse and sentence of banishment on the murderer of Laius. This spirit was the great civic virtue that Pericles preached—"I would have you fix your eyes every day on the greatness of Athens until you fall in love with her"—and which the enemies of Athens knew they had to reckon with—"In the city's service," say the Corinthians, "they use their bodies as if they did not belong to them."

All this does not necessarily mean that Sophocles's audience drew a conscious parallel between Oedipus and Athens (or even that Sophocles himself did); what is important is that they could have seen in Oedipus a man endowed with the temperament and talents they prized most highly in their own democratic leaders and in their ideal vision of themselves. Oedipus the King is a dramatic embodiment of the creative vigor and intellectual daring of the fifth-century Athenian spirit.

BUT THERE IS an even greater dimension to this extraordinary dramatic figure. The fifth century in Athens saw the birth of the historical spirit. The past came to be seen no longer as a golden age from which there had been a decline if not a fall, but as a steady progress from primitive barbarism to the high civilization of the city-state. One of the new teachers, the sophist Protagoras, was particularly associated with this idea; and there is a particularly clear reflection of his ideas in that chorus of *Antigone* that sings the praise of man the resourceful. "Man the master, ingenious past all measure . . . /he forges on. . . ." Three of the most important achievements of man celebrated in that ode are his conquest of the earth, the sea, and the animals. And Oedipus, in the images of the play, is presented to us as hunter, sailor, and plowman. He is the hunter who follows "the trail of the

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ancient guilt"; the sailor who, in the chorus's words, "set our beloved land—storm-tossed, shattered—straight on course"; and he is also the plowman—"How," sings the chorus when the truth is out at last,

> how could the furrows your father
> plowed bear you, your agony,
> harrowing
> on in silence O so long?

But Oedipus speaks too in terms that connect him with more advanced stages of human progress. Among these—the culmination of the *Antigone* ode—was the creation of the city-state, "the mood and mind for law that rules the city." Oedipus is a ruling statesman; he is a self-made man who has won and kept control of the state, a master of the political art, and he is conscious of his achievement and its value. And, as head of the state, Oedipus is the enforcer of the law. He is, in the play, the investigator, prosecutor, and judge of a murderer. In all these aspects he represents the social and intellectual progress that had resulted in the establishment of Athenian democracy and its courts of law, a triumph of human progress celebrated in the last play of Aeschylus's *Oresteia*.

THE FIGURE of Oedipus represents not only the techniques of the transition from savagery to civilization and the political achievements of the newly settled society, but also the temper and methods of the fifth-century intellectual revolution. His speeches are full of words, phrases, and attitudes that link him with the "enlightenment" of Sophocles's own Athens. "I'll bring it all to light," he says; he is like some Protagoras or Democritus dispelling the darkness of ignorance and superstition. He is a questioner, a researcher, a discoverer—the Greek words are those of the sophistic vocabulary. Above all Oedipus is presented to the audience as a symbol of two of the greatest scientific achievements of the age—mathematics and medicine. Mathematical language recurs incessantly in the imagery of the play—such terms as "measure" (*metrein*), "equate" (*isoun*), "define" (*diorizein*)—and at one climactic moment Oedipus expresses his hope as a mathematical axiom that a discrepancy in the evidence will clear him of the charge of Laius's murder: "One can't equal many." This obsessive image, Oedipus the calculator, is one more means of investing the mythical figure with the salient characteristics of the fifth-century achievement, but it is also magnificently functional. For, in his search for truth, he is engaged in a great calculation to determine the measure of man, whom Protagoras called "the measure of all things."

Functional too is the richly developed image of Oedipus as a physician. Hippocrates of Cos and his school of physicians had in this same century founded Western medicine; their treatises and casebooks are still extant, and in them we can see the new methods at work: detailed observations of hundreds of cases, classification of symptoms, plotting of the regular course of individual diseases and then diagnosis, prognosis (these are Greek words, their words). In the play the city suffers from a disease and Oedipus is the physician to whom all turn for a cure.

And all these images, like the plot, like the hero, have what Aristotle called their *peripeteia*, their reversal. The hunter catches a dreadful prey, the seaman steers his ship into an unspeakable harbor—"one and the same wide harbor served you/son and father both"—the plowman sows and reaps a fearful harvest, the investigator finds the criminal, and the judge convicts him—they are all the same man—the revealer turns into the thing revealed, the finder into the thing found, the calculator finds he is himself the solution of the equation, and the physician discovers that he is the disease. The catastrophe of the tragic hero thus becomes the catastrophe of fifth-century man; all his furious energy and intellectual daring drive him on to this terrible discovery of his fundamental ignorance. He is not the measure of all things but the thing measured and found wanting.

The reversal of the tragic hero is singled out for praise by Aristotle because it comes about through recognition, in this case Oedipus's recognition of his own identity. But he recognizes also that the prophecies given to his father and to him by Apollo were true prophecies, that they had been fulfilled long ago, that every step taken to evade them, from the exposure of the child to the decision never to go back to Corinth, was part of the pattern of their fulfillment. And this poses, for the

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modern reader as for the ancient spectator, the question of fate and, though those spectators could not have expressed the idea in abstract terms, of free will and human freedom.

This basic theme has often been discounted on the grounds that the opposition of fate and free will, providence and chance, determined and open universe, was not explicitly formulated until much later than Sophocles's time, in the philosophical discussions of the late fourth and third centuries. This is true, but it does not necessarily follow that because a problem had not yet been given philosophical expression, it could not be conceived. The myth of Oedipus itself—like the stories of attempts to escape a predicted fate so frequent in the *Histories* of Sophocles's friend Herodotus—poses the problem in poetic form, and one of the functions of myth in preliterate societies, as Levi-Strauss has so brilliantly demonstrated, is to raise deeply disturbing problems that will later demand more precise formulation.

Even though what remains of early Greek literature shows no verbal consciousness of the ideas we associate with freedom of the will, there is abundant evidence, from the earliest times, for a related concept that is in fact almost inseparable from it: individual responsibility. No one can be held fully responsible for actions committed under some kind of external constraint, and in early Greek belief such constraint might be exerted by a host of nonhuman powers. When Agamemnon, in Homer's *Iliad*, makes his apologies to Achilles for the harsh treatment that led to the death of so many heroes, he tries to evade responsibility: he is claiming, in other words, that he did not act freely: "I am not responsible/but Zeus is, and Destiny. . . . " The context suggests that this is merely an excuse. But the negative implication of this is clear: that a man *is* responsible for those actions that are not performed under constraint, which are the expression of his free will. The question of Oedipus's responsibility for what happens (and what has happened) is, as we shall see, posed in the play; it is also discussed much later, in *Oedipus at Colonus*, which deals with Oedipus's old age and death.

It is interesting to note that in those later centuries, when the stoic philosophers do pose the problem in abstract form, they start from this same mythical base, the oracle given to Laius. Chrysippus uses this oracle to illustrate his almost completely determinist position (the only freedom he allows man is that of a dog tied to a moving cart); Carneades reinterprets the oracle to allow man a little more freedom; Alexander of Aphrodisias takes up the challenge on the same ground, and Cicero debates the meaning of this same oracular prophecy. As long as Greek philosophy lasts, the discussion of Oedipus's freedom or his subjection to fate goes on—even in the commentaries on Plato by Albinus in the second and Calcidus in the sixth century A.D.

The end of Greek philosophy and the triumph of Christianity brought no end to the argument, only new terms in which to phrase it. St. Augustine wrote his book *On Freedom of the Will (De Libero Arbitrio)* just as Cicero had written his *On Fate (De Fato)*; Augustine is no longer concerned with the oracle given to Laius, but he is just as tormented (as he claims all humanity is) by the contradiction between our free will and God's foreknowledge that we will sin. It was of course an argument that was to go further; Bergson, Croce, and Friedrich Engels, to name only a few, continue it into modern times. It has become much more complicated and sophisticated with the years; the terms of the opposition can be, and have been, continually redefined in philosophically elegant formulas that are designed, and may even seem, to abolish it; and of course modern analytical philosophers can dismiss the problem as a mere verbal misunderstanding. But to the ordinary man, now as in Sophocles's day, there is a problem in the coexistence of predictable pattern and free will, whether that pattern be thought of as divine providence, the will of history, or the influence of the stars.

There are two obvious ways of avoiding the contradiction, both of them extreme positions and at opposite poles; one might call them, to use a political

MR. WAKEFIELD ON INTERSTATE 90

"Now I will abandon the route of my life
as my shadowy wives abandon me, taking my children.
I will stop. I will park in a summer street
where the days tick like metal in the stillness.
Then I will rent the room over Bert's Modern Barbershop
where the TO LET sign leans in the plateglass window;
or I will buy the brown BUNGALOW FOR SALE.

"I will work forty hours a week clerking at the paintstore.
On Fridays I will cash my paycheck at Six Rivers Bank
and stop at Harvey's Market and talk with Harvey.
Walking on Maple Street I will speak to everyone.
At basketball games I will cheer for my neighbors' sons.
I will watch my neighbors' daughters grow up, marry,
raise children. The joints of my fingers will stiffen.

"There will be no room inside me for other places.
I will attend funerals regularly and weddings.
I will chat with the mailman when he comes on Saturdays.
I will shake my head when I hear of the florist
who drops dead in the greenhouse over a flat of pansies;
I spoke with her only yesterday . . .
When lawyer elopes with babysitter I will shake my head.

"When Harvey's boy enlists in the Navy
I will wave goodbye at the Trailways Depot with the others.
I will applaud the valedictorian at graduation,
and wish her well, as she goes away to the University,
and weep, as she goes away. I will live in a steady joy;
I will exult in the ecstasy of my concealment.
The only mystery is the mystery of the ordinary."

DONALD HALL

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metaphor, the right and the left. The right is all for order and pattern; it escapes the dilemma by dispensing with freedom altogether. It sees history, individual and general, as a rigidly determined succession of events in time. If you take such a view, whether Christian with St. Augustine—that all history is God's providential preparation of two cities, one of God, one of Satan, and that certain souls are predestined for salvation (or with Calvin, that other souls are destined for damnation); or materialist and atheist with Marx and Engels, denying the freedom of history to all classes but the proletariat—"Freedom," wrote Engels, "is the recognition of necessity" (which is a German version of Chrysippus's dog tied to a cart)—if you take either of these determinist views, you have no antinomy, no contradiction. But you have no freedom, and unless you happen to be one of the Christian or the Marxist elect, you have no future either.

What we have called the left, on the other hand, is all for freedom. To the devil with pattern and order; they are for anarchy, the human will is absolutely free and nothing is predictable; there is no pattern of order in the universe, which is merely the operation of blind chance. If you deny the possibility of prediction and the existence of order, whether as an "atomic" theorist like Democritus, or out of sheer desperation, as Jocasta does in the play—"What should a man fear? It's all chance, chance rules our lives"—you have abolished the logical contradiction. But you accept a blind, pointless, meaningless universe—the universe of the absurd.

BOTH OF THESE extremes are of course repugnant to the human spirit and especially to that of the West, which is that of the Greeks. We want both the freedom of our will and the assurance of order and meaning; we want to have our cake and eat it too, and in this non-Christian and Christian are alike. But no matter what subtle distinctions we invent and refine, the basic contradiction remains. Insofar as any meaningful pattern or divine providence exists, it must encroach to some extent on human freedom; if human freedom is unlimited, the possibility of pattern or order is denied.

As a logical proposition, the two concepts are irreconcilable. The only way to believe in the pattern and the freedom at once is not as a logical proposition but as a mystery; the medium of exploration is not philosophy but religion—or art. We can say, as Tertullian is supposed to have said (but almost certainly didn't), "I believe it precisely because it is absurd," or we can express the contradiction in poetic terms that transcend logic. It is significant that Plato's main discussion of the problem is not phrased in the cut and thrust of dialectic, but in the great myths, as in the myth of Er, where Socrates is no longer subject to questioning. Only a mood of religious humility or a work of art can hold in precarious coexistence the irreconcilable concepts. But for one form of art, the drama, this is a particularly dangerous subject. For the power of drama depends on our feeling that the actors are free, that their choice of action is significant. The dramatist who, like Sophocles, dares to base his drama on a story that seems to question if not rule out freedom of action is walking a perilous tightrope.

THE SOUL OF drama, as Aristotle says, is plot—the action that demands and succeeds in engaging our attention so that we are no longer detached spectators but are involved in the progress of the stage events. Its outcome is important for us; in the greatest plots (and the plot of this play by Sophocles is perhaps the greatest) it is for the moment the most important thing in the world. But this engagement of the audience proceeds from an identification with the figures on stage, and this is not possible if we are made to feel that the action of the characters is not free, not effective. We expect to be made to feel that there is a meaningful relation between the hero's action and his suffering, and this is possible only if that action is free, so that he is responsible for the consequences.

The hero's will must be free, but something else is needed: it must have some causal connection with his suffering. It is the function of great art to give meaning to human suffering, and so we expect that if the hero is crushed by a bulldozer in Act II, there will be some reason for it, and not just some reason but a good one, one that makes sense in terms of the hero's personality and action. In fact, we expect to be shown that he is in some way *responsible* for what happens to him.

If so, the hero obviously cannot be "fated," predestined or determined to act as he does. And Oedipus in Sophocles's play *is* a free agent, and he is responsible for the catastrophe. For the plot of the play consists not of the actions that Oedipus was "fated" to perform, or rather, that were predicted—the plot of the play consists of his discovery that he has already fulfilled the prediction. And this discovery is entirely due to his action.

He dismisses Creon's politic advice to discuss the Delphic response in private; he undertakes a public and vigorous inquiry into the murder of Laius. He is the driving force that, against the reluctance of Tiresias, the dissuasion of Jocasta, and the final supplication of the shepherd, pushes on triumphantly and disastrously to the discovery of the truth. If it had not been for Oedipus, the play persuades us, the truth would never have been discovered, or at least it would not have been discovered *now*. This presentation of the hero's freedom and responsibility, in the context of the dreadful prophecy already unwittingly and unwillingly fulfilled, is an artistic juxtaposition, a momentary illusion of full reconciliation between the two mighty opposites, freedom and destiny. It is an illusion because of course the question of responsibility for what happened *before* the play, of Oedipus's freedom in the context of divine prophecies fulfilled, is evaded. But it makes the play a triumphant tour de force. Oedipus is the free agent who, by his own self-willed action, discovers that his own predicted destiny has already been fulfilled. This is why the play moves us as a spectacle of heroic action and why the figure of Oedipus, dominating the stage, arouses our admiration as well as our sympathy. It is noticeable that in Cocteau's masterpiece, where Oedipus is deliberately portrayed as a marionette in the hands of demonic powers, the greatest dramatic excitement is generated by the action and speech not of

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Oedipus but of those divine powers, Anubis and the Sphinx.

Oedipus's heroic achievement is the discovery of the truth, and that discovery is the most thoroughgoing and dreadful catastrophe the stage has ever presented. The hero who, in his vigor, courage, and intelligence stands as a representative of all that is creative in man, discovers a truth so dreadful that the chorus that sums up the results of the great calculation sees in his fall the reduction of man to nothing:

> O the generations of men
> the dying generations—adding the total
> of all your lives I find they come to
> nothing

The existence of human freedom, dramatically represented in the *action* of Oedipus in the play, seems to be a mockery. The discovery to which it led is a catastrophe out of all proportion to the situation. Critics have tried, with contradictory results, to find some flaw in Oedipus's character that will justify his reversal. But there is nothing in his actions that can make it acceptable to us. The chorus's despairing summation, "come to nothing," echoes our own feelings as we watch Oedipus rush into the palace.

But this estimate of the situation is not the last word; in fact, it is contradicted by the final scene of the play. Oedipus's first thought, we are told by the messenger, was to kill himself—he asked for a sword—but he blinds himself instead. This action is one that the audience must have expected; it was mentioned in the earlier *Antigone*, for example, and Oedipus as the blind, exiled wanderer seems to have been one of the invariable elements in fifth-century versions of the myth. But, though the blindness was foreseen by Tiresias, Oedipus's action did not figure in the prophecies made to and about him by Apollo. When the messenger comes from inside the palace to describe the catastrophe, he uses words that emphasize the independence of this action: "terrible things, and none done blindly now, all done with a will." And as Oedipus, wearing a mask with blood running from the eye sockets, stumbles on stage, he makes the same distinction when the chorus asks him what power impelled him to attack his eyes:

> Apollo, friends, Apollo—
> he ordained my agonies—
> these, my pains on pains!
> But the hand that struck my eyes was mine,
> mine alone—no one else—

These two passages suggest that in his decision to blind himself Oedipus is acting freely, that the intricate pattern of his destiny was complete when he knew the truth. To that terrible revelation some violent reaction was inevitable; the choice was left to him. He resisted the first suicidal impulse perhaps (though Sophocles is silent on the point) because of a latent conviction, fully and openly expounded in the last play (*Oedipus at Colonus*), that he was not to blame. He chose to blind himself, he tells the chorus, because he could not bear to see the faces of his children and his fellow citizens. But his action has, in the context of this play, an impressive rightness; the man who, proud of his far-seeing intelligence, taunted Tiresias with his blindness, now realizes that all his life long he has himself been blind to the dreadful realities of his identity and action.

THE MESSENGER'S description of the horrors that took place inside the palace has prepared the audience for the spectacle of a broken man. So Oedipus seems to be at first, but very soon this bloodstained, sightless figure begins to reassert that magnificent imperious personality that was his from the beginning. He reproaches the chorus for wishing him dead rather than blind, defends his decision to blind himself, issues instructions to Creon, and finally has to be reminded that he is no longer master in Thebes. The despairing summation based on the fate of Oedipus—the great example (as the chorus calls him) that man is equal to nothing—is corrected by the reemergence of Oedipus as his old forceful self. Formidable as of old he may be, but with a difference. The confident tone in which the blind man speaks so regally is based on knowledge, knowledge of his own identity and of the truth of divine prophecy. This new knowledge, won at such a terrible price, makes clear what it was in the hero that brought about the disaster. It was ignorance.

In spite of his name *Oidipous*, with its resemblance to the Greek word *oida* ("I know")—a theme that Sophocles hammers home with continual word-play—Oedipus, who thought he knew so much, did not even know who his mother and father were. But ignorance can be remedied, the ignorant can learn, and the force with which Oedipus now reasserts his presence springs from the truth he now understands: that the universe is not a field for the play of blind chance, and that man is not its measure. This knowledge gives him a new strength that sustains him in his misery and gives him the courage needed to go on living, though he is now an outcast, a man from whom his fellow men recoil in horror.

The play, then, is a tremendous reassertion of the traditional religious view that man is ignorant, that knowledge belongs only to the gods—Freud's "theological purpose." And it seems to present at first sight a view of the universe as rigid on the side of order as Jocasta's was anarchic on the side of freedom. Jocasta thought that there was no order or design in the world, that dreams and prophecies had no validity; that man had complete freedom because it made no difference what he did—nothing made any sense. Jocasta was wrong; the design was there, and when she saw what it was she hanged herself. But the play now seems to give us a view of man's position that is just as comfortless as her acceptance of a meaningless universe. What place is there in it for human freedom and meaningful action?

OEDIPUS DID have one freedom: he was free to find out or not find out the truth. This was the element of Sophoclean sleight of hand that enabled him to make a drama out of the situation which the philosophers used as the classic demonstration of man's subjection to fate. But it is more than a solution to an apparently insoluble dramatic problem; it is the key to the play's tragic theme and the protagonist's heroic stature. One freedom is allowed him: the freedom to search for the truth, the truth about the prophecies, about the gods, about himself. And of this freedom he makes full use. Against the advice and appeals of others, he pushes on, searching for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And in this search he shows all those great qualities that we admire in him—courage, intelligence, perseverance—the qualities that make human beings great. This freedom to search, and the heroic way Oedipus uses it, makes the play not a picture of man's feebleness caught in the toils of fate, but on the contrary, a heroic example of man's dedication to the search for truth, the truth about himself. This is perhaps the only human freedom, the play seems to say, but there could be none more noble.

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REGRESS AND PILLAGE

Progress and Privilege: America in the Age of Environmentalism by William Tucker

(Doubleday, 314 pp., $17.95)

It is difficult to know where to begin on William Tucker's *Progress and Privilege*. I believe I have never read a book as biased, confused, and intermittently informed as this one, or one more likely to be dangerous if taken seriously, as this is certain to be by the ideologues of the Reagan Administration. It reads as if it had been written on a fellowship provided by James Watt. Though I do not in general believe in destructive reviews, holding with William Dean Howells that a bad book is not necessarily a misdemeanor, I am going to have to attack this one. Because this one *is* a misdemeanor, or worse.

Mr. Tucker, a frequent contributor to *Harper's* and other publications, thinks he has a case against the environmental movement. Conceiving it as many people conceive world communism—monolithically—he selects the elements from its history, advocates, and convictions that he needs to create his straw man, whom he then attacks with pitchfork, flail, and torch. Tucker has a way of stating a generalized position, often based on selected facts, misunderstood facts, or no facts at all, and thereafter accepting it as a rule of the universe. There is a great deal that Tucker does not know, and much that he misinterprets, and much that he avoids talking about, but the gist of his quarrel with "the environmentalists" goes something like this:

Environmentalism is "the conservatism of the liberals," the dog-in-the manger exclusiveness of an elite determined to preserve its privileged status. It is anti-progress, anti-industry, anti-democracy, and opposed to human betterment. "In the end, it has become an extremely conservative doctrine—fearful of the future, despairing of human effort, worried about change, and wed to the status quo."

Environmentalism is against science, Mr. Tucker believes (conveniently forgetting that the earth and life sciences are its core and justification) and therefore hostile to the only effective means of human betterment. Environmentalists take positive pleasure in hampering the industrialism that gave them their privileged position and that allows them to come to protest meetings in automobiles. In the past fifteen years they have created an effective lobby, a vast bureaucracy, and a body of restrictive law that combine to freeze the country into static, no-growth, low-goal postures, and have cost it its primacy as an industrial economy. The motives of the environmentalists are corrupted by self-interest, and hence impure. Well-to-do suburbanites don't want anybody developing the field or lot next door, or obstructing their views.

Interrupting himself with occasional assertions of objectivity (the environmental movement has done some good; some of his best friends are environmentalists), Mr. Tucker takes us through what he calls the main currents of environmental thought, from its advocacy of wilderness to its skepticism about the Green Revolution and genetic engineering. Just as one looks for the truth of a budget in the appropriation bills that implement it, one must look for the meat of Mr. Tucker's thesis in these supporting and documentary chapters. Unfortunately, Mr. Tucker's details are as often wrong as his generalizations are misleading.

It would be easy to demonstrate that the loose accretion of attitudes called the environmental movement is not without sin. Its positions have often been overstated by enthusiasts. Occasionally, attempting to forestall some environmental calamity, it has brought on something worse. It has attracted freaks and gurus, it has sometimes misread the future and mistaken apparent dangers for real ones. Mr. Tucker would have done us all a favor if he had examined environmentalism with the honest intention of separating its valid positions from its panicky or hysterical ones. But Mr. Tucker did not set out to examine the environmental movement; he set out to discredit it. His conclusions were reached before he began his study.

He rarely deals with the substance of the environmental situation—increasingly poisoned air and water, depleted resources, vanishing species, inexorably growing numbers of the weed species man. Except when he thinks he has caught some environmentalist in exaggeration—when he disparages Paul Ehrlich's population bomb, or finds that the ice caps haven't melted yet, or discovers somewhat smugly that we have not all been poisoned with mercury—he tells us nothing about whether air, water, and land are really as polluted and endangered as various environmental groups have asserted. He says, in fact, that they are not, but he does not give us much evidence. One hunts in vain through these pages for a substantive discussion of nuclear accidents, nuclear and chemical waste disposal, water pollution, air pollution, acid rain, the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, or the depletion of the earth's gene pool. What he does is ridicule people who worry about such things. On the subject of endangered species, he has some fun with the snail darter. On the subject of wilderness, national parks, and health through nature, he quotes us Irving Babbitt on the absurdities of romanticism.

The argument is rarely substantive, never thorough, generally ad hominem, often circular, sometimes contradictory. Thus in his introduction, when he is trying to demonstrate that environmentalism was an aberration of the 1960s,

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Mr. Tucker declares that "in the early 1960s the environmental movement did not exist." Later, when he wants to prove that environmentalists have been kooks and crazies for a century or more, he says, "There has always been an environmental movement."

He is right the second time. The Nature strain that runs through American history from the mid-eighteenth century onward has been as characteristic a theme in our thinking as liberty, democracy, or private initiative. If it wasn't, we have to discard from the tradition John and William Bartram, Jefferson, Emerson, Thoreau, Marsh, Powell, Muir, and a host of others. What was Crévecoeur about, if not the stewardship of the earth that is environmentalism's basic law? What gave Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot their public support just after the turn of the century, when that "damned cowboy" and his henchman invented conservation?

MR. TUCKER mistrusts every statement of the philosophy of stewardship. To say so may give him credit for knowing thinkers and movements better than he does, but does not misstate his attitude.

Disparaging the "computerized prophecy" of the viewers-with-alarm (he forgets that they are utilizing "science," by which he always means technology), Mr. Tucker anticipates continued and growing productivity from the Green Revolution and apparently does not believe in world hunger. Limits—what are those? A shibboleth of the environmentalists. He believes that "if they *continue* [italics mine] to be handled intelligently, the forests will always regrow." (Erosion, soil depletion, alterations of climate by extensive tree-cutting, we may wave aside. Any time we want redwood groves or an Amazonian rain forest, science and good management, such as that of the Forest Service or the large timber corporations, can produce them.) He thinks it inconceivable "that any human activity, short of all-out nuclear war, can be expected to bring about a radical impoverishment of the biosphere," and he concludes happily that "the future is probably brighter than we realize."

The Green Revolution may indeed do much to relieve world hunger, but it has limitations (it demands heavy applications of fertilizer, most of it derived from oil) and dangers (genetically uniform plantings are subject to devastating disease infestations) that Mr. Tucker doesn't dwell on. In the end, even he may be grateful for the USDA station outside Fort Collins, Colorado (Mr. Tucker does not mention it), where viable seeds of land-race grains and grasses are stored against possible genetic disaster of the kind that struck hybrid corn in 1970. Science, which Mr. Tucker says he values but which he evidently doesn't read, is very busy preparing for just the kind of eventuality that the environmentalists foresee and Mr. Tucker dismisses.

Has he really read and understood George Perkins Marsh? He cites him in his bibliography. Has he read *Soil and Civilization*? Has he read *Deserts on the March*? If he did, he would know that human activity far short of nuclear war has already turned large areas of the earth into desert, and that desertification goes on even as he writes. Does he pay attention to such minor details as climate? If he had, he would know that in some climates, such as that of Vermont, forests do indeed regrow, but that in others they do not.

A principal weakness of Mr. Tucker's case is his tendency to pick from history only the facts he wants. Another is his willingness to generalize where he has few if any solid facts to generalize from. I am not scholar enough to check on him in some areas, but when he gets into my territory, which is the West, he reveals himself. Somebody should tell Mr. Tucker about the West, for the West contains the bulk of the public domain outside of Alaska, and the public domain—one-third of the nation—is the focus for much of the environmentalism that is his theme.

When the public domain figures in *Progress and Privilege* it figures only briefly, and both its facts and their interpretation need repair. Mr. Tucker gets even the most rudimentary details wrong. He thinks there is a "Bureau of Land Reclamation," and he believes that its territories have been "closed to resource development through permanent wilderness designations." If he means the old Bureau of Reclamation, none of its lands have been given permanent wilderness designation. If he means the Bureau of Land Management, he ought to say so; and he ought to add that there has been far more uproar about wilderness *study* areas in Bureau of Land Management lands than about those limited tracts designated as permanent wilderness.

When speaking of the West, Mr. Tucker rarely manages to get through a page without scraping the bottom of his information. He repeats the tired Sagebrush Rebellion misrepresentation calling for the "return" of the federal lands to the states—which never owned them and never should. He castigates the Sierra Club for opposing the Homestead Act, apparently without knowing that the Homestead Act had proved a disaster all through the arid West. He suggests that Major John Wesley Powell had "an Ivy League background" (this is to link him with the suburban elitists, one supposes) and says that Powell's 1869 expedition "discovered" the Grand Canyon. Cárdenas, who discovered the Grand Canyon in 1540, would be surprised.

Tucker believes that the 100th meridian runs "near Denver." It runs about as close to Denver as Tucker's native Brooklyn is to Richmond, Virginia. He says that Major Powell's recommendations for Western settlement were rejected by Congress "for decades." It didn't take quite that long. Powell submitted his *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region* in 1878, and Congress had stomped it to death by 1890.

THESE ARE only samples. As with factual details, so with generalizations arising from them. "The National Parks movement was an upper-crust cause if only because only wealthy people had the time to spend lobbying Congress and the legislatures with no great economic gain at stake." John Muir was upper-crust? Disinterestedness is unsavory if expressed by the well-to-do? And why, one wonders, would anyone, upper-crust or not, be lobbying *state* legislatures on the issue of *national* parks?

Finally, "wildernesses . . . are essentially parks for the upper middle class," and "the concept of wilderness is essentially a rejection of multiple use." In the first statement Tucker reveals how little he knows about the West, how ignorant he is of the daily uses that all sorts of Westerners (and tourists) find for the wilderness areas and the rest of the public domain. In the second, he regurgitates the sentiments of the timber industry and some elements of the Forest Service, for whom an area off-limits to chainsaws is an abomination, and for whom logging, which destroys the spawning beds of trout, damages watersheds, hampers biological research, cre-

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ates ugliness, mars the pleasure of recreationists, and does immeasurable harm to native plants and animals, is "multiple use," while a system that preserves all those values is not.

Throughout the book, Mr. Tucker is an anti-Malthusian, skeptical of long-range warnings about overpopulation and dwindling resources, and persuaded that technology will solve these problems as they arise. He defends Gifford Pinchot's "conservation for use" against what he calls the "preservationists." He is indignant about the "locking-up" of resources that might contribute to growing American prosperity. With his head in the sand and his vision obscured, he comes out strongly for American initiative. Instead of having us prepare for the problems of the twenty-first century, already in plain sight, he would return us to the attitudes and habits of the nineteenth, already, we might have hoped, discarded.

Progress and Privilege is not a serious study but a polemic, full of intellectual shoddiness and political special pleading. The vision is cripplingly narrow, so narrow that by the end Mr. Tucker discovers that he has painted himself into a corner. Having attacked environmentalism for 300-odd pages, he projects a future shaped by "clean and safe" nuclear energy, genetic engineering, the harnessing of sunlight, the improvement of our energy efficiency, and the end of our wastefulness. Except for the confidence in nuclear energy and genetic engineering, it is a program that might have been written by Barry Commoner or the Sierra Club.

"Fearful of the future, despairing of human effort, worried about change, and wedded to the status quo"—thus Mr. Tucker describes the environmental movement early on. He should look again. It is not the future that environmentalists are afraid of; it is the repeated errors of the past. It is not human effort or change that they disparage; they expend enormous effort in the disinterested attempt to bring about change. It is not the environmentalists who are wed to the status quo; it is Mr. Tucker himself, who has in this book turned himself into a mouthpiece for reaction.

WALLACE STEGNER

Wallace Stegner's latest book is *One Way to Spell Man* (Doubleday).

SICKNESS UNTO DEATH

Suicide in America
by Herbert Hendin

(Norton, 258 pp., $16.95)

During the last two decades the suicide rate for young people in this country, those aged 15 to 24, has risen dramatically. It is now about two-and-one-half times what it was in the 1950s. No one seems to find this truly surprising; it corresponds to our intuitions about the young. Yet we have no agreement about why it has happened. To be sure, theories abound, some of them of breathtaking simplemindedness. I recently heard an academic dignitary tell an audience that the rise in youth suicide was tied to the decline in political protest. That is simply not the case: the suicide rate among the young was quite low during the Eisenhower years and rose steadily during the period of campus upheaval. We sometimes come across more sophisticated versions of the same general formula, one which links changes in the suicide rate to larger political and economic events. We may hear (from a liberal) that the young are troubled by the national malaise, as witness Vietnam and Watergate and unemployment. His conservative counterpart points to the decline of family authority and the erosion of traditional values. A somewhat related approach concentrates on demographic categories: religion, social class, marital status, age, race, etc. Some of these are remarkably powerful predictors of the tendency to suicide: an elderly white male, recently retired, recently widowed, is at a very high risk, relative to other segments of the population, should he begin to show signs of depression.

Yet sociological theories taken alone leave too many questions unanswered. Woman far more frequently suffer from depression, yet men kill themselves far more often. Catholic countries have lower rates than Protestant, yet one of the world's highest rates is to be found in heavily Catholic Austria. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway are very nearly identical triplets demographically and culturally, yet the first two have a high and the third a low rate of suicide. And the sociological approach tells us little about individual susceptibility. Marital dissolution is clearly linked to suicide, yet millions endure separation and divorce, pick up the pieces, and resume satisfactory lives. Hundreds of thousands of college students feel themselves overwhelmed by academic pressures, yet only a handful are thereby led to kill themselves. Seen from the outside, many suicides seem to make no sense at all. The first person I ever knew who killed herself was a classmate who cribbed some answers on an examination, became agitated and morose, and decided she was no longer worthy to live. The second was a man who had had a trivial setback in an otherwise gratifying career—he felt that the "disgrace" was too much to bear. Certainly there was nothing in the external circumstances of either life to warrant suicide. To understand the act, we would have to look more deeply.

Looking more deeply—in a certain way—has been Herbert Hendin's mission as a scholar of suicide. He is a psychoanalyst who achieved his early reputation through an ingenious investigation of the variations in Scandinavian suicide noted above. Using a variety of methods, ranging from the study of themes in fiction to interviews with "failed" suicidal patients, he was able to demonstrate different patterns of stress in the three nations, leading both to different rates, and to different motives for suicide. The Danes, for example, were preoccupied with issues of attachment and loss; the Swedes, with achievement and self-control. Though both countries show high rates, the suicides in each tend to derive from different motivations. Hendin next studied the rise in suicide among young urban blacks, and wrote a book describing the turning inward of rage endemic in that population. More recently he has studied suicidal college students, arguing that the achievement stresses so often seen as the source of their despair in fact conceal pathological family relationships.

In each of these investigations Hendin has been able to show that a

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tangled skein of motives and social stresses leads up to the suicidal act. He calls his approach "psychosocial," and says of it that

> social factors operating through the family have a powerful effect on the individual's early experiences and adaptive capacities, causing certain psychodynamic configurations to develop in sharing their manifestations.

There is a certain shapelessness in that statement, and if one were so inclined one would raise hard questions about each and every phrase: Which social factors? How do they operate? Which psychodynamic configurations?

There is in fact a certain shapelessness to the book as a whole. Unlike Hendin's earlier writings, it is not thematically focused and tends to wander from chapter to chapter and, for that matter, within chapters. For example, what begins as an extremely interesting discussion of the high suicide rates among homosexuals somehow loses its way to become a discussion of black homosexuality. We do not get, the title notwithstanding, any discussion of the Americanness of suicide, only a loosely linked set of essays on various types and aspects of suicide: among the young and the old, in relation to various clinical conditions, the implications for public policy, and so on. Curiously enough, the weakest parts of the book are the clinical sections. Although the case material is of the highest interest, and at times presented brilliantly, Hendin often lets it overwhelm the narrative. Nevertheless, neither the thematic and theoretical looseness nor the occasionally maddening *collagiste* mode of exposition seriously detracts from the ultimate value of the book. Both the general reader and the specialist will be enlightened by it. It has two virtues that overcome its faults: it is written out of a vast experience with suicides; and it is the product of a mind free of cant.

As to the first, few psychotherapists accumulate a wide and varied knowledge of seriously suicidal patients. The work is too depressing, too daunting, too wearying. Even a soundly conducted psychotherapy can have a fatal outcome. Quite aside from the sense of acute personal loss should his patient commit suicide, the therapist will also have to cope with the gossip of colleagues, the recriminations of the surviving family, and—these days—the distinct prospect of malpractice litigation. As a result, many psychotherapists find ways to avoid treating the seriously suicidal. A further result is that those most in need of treatment are not treated but—as Hendin so rightly points out—"managed," that is, kept from "doing it," as against being helped to understand themselves and their despair. Yet another result is that few psychotherapists build up a backlog of personal clinical knowledge, so that the psychodynamic understanding of suicide has tended to lag behind, when compared with disorders less threatening to practitioners. Hence what we know, or think we know, is likely to be based on the single or exceptional instances that come to our attention.

THE CLINICAL literature, which customarily fills the gap in our direct experience, is of surprisingly little help, for as Hendin correctly points out, it tends to be rather abstract, the writers seeming to draw back from the horror of the experience. So we tend to have partial or incomplete, and thus misleading, theories of suicide. What we learn from Hendin, and from a handful of other courageous souls who have given themselves to this topic, is that the motives leading to suicide are enormously varied, that there is no one "suicidal personality," and that it is illusory to imagine that we will every uncover a single clue to its many mysteries. So the first merit of this book is that it acquaints us with the author's experience, both direct and vicarious, of the many reasons people have for finding life no longer worth living.

The sheer quality of experience Hendin has acquired may be less important than the quality of mind brought to bear on that experience. In saying that he has a mind free of cant, I mean, more specifically, that he is relatively free of melodrama, sentimentality, ideology, abstractness, and spurious "neutrality." His writing is compassionate yet not bathetic, straightforward yet not distant or callous. That balance is harder to achieve than one might believe, since suicide—and quasi-suicidal death—has been so fulsomely romanticized in recent years, largely because of the highly publicized cases of a number of poets and show-business personalities. We have also seen the emergence of a "right to suicide" movement, supported by a libertarian doctrine which sees the right to kill oneself as a fundamental human freedom. Hendin is mordant about the movement, and scornful of its psychological assumptions, for he feels that suicides, even ones that are completed, are almost always undertaken in a spirit of intense ambivalence. They are not the rational choices of free and autonomous personalities. He does not believe that society ought to offer suicide even a tacit acceptance and approval; he fears, correctly, that it would encourage vulnerable personalities.

HE DOES NOT, on the other hand, hold out utopian hopes for any substantial solution to the problem of suicide in the foreseeable future. Suicide prevention centers may be of some general value in easing the burdens of the troubled, but they seem not to have much effect in diminishing the frequency of suicide; they do not attract the clientele most likely to carry out a successful suicide. One might think that the hospitalization, either voluntary or compulsory, of those intent on killing themselves would have some deterrent effect, but Hendin's review of that literature leaves him skeptical; hospitalization itself may have a demoralizing effect. In any case, as he points out, one cannot lock up someone indefinitely simply to prevent his death. Would the provision of good—genuinely good—psychotherapy to the potential suicide make a difference? I happen to believe so, but only as a matter of faith. So far as I know there is no strong scientific evidence one way or the other. It seems that we will have to keep learning, painfully and step by step, more than we now do about the dynamics of this extraordinarily complex act of human will, an act dense in motivation, entrenched in both personal history and social circumstances. We have in fact come a long way during the last generation, thanks in large part to a small but determined group of social scientists who, like Hendin, have given much of their careers to the study of suicide.

JOSEPH ADELSON

Joseph Adelson is professor of psychology at the University of Michigan.

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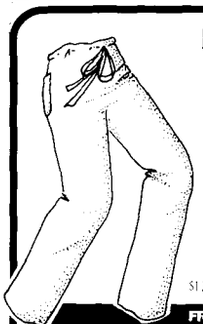

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China Diarist

Cultural Restitution

"**DELEGATION!**" exclaimed a street-wise girl in Shanghai when she noticed our group of ten Americans walking along the old bund. Tens of thousands of Chinese were milling around the waterfront that night, seeking relief from the intense heat, but only the girl took notice of us. In China nowadays, delegations come and go. After the drabness of bureaucratic Peking, Shanghai, with its lively restaurants, shops, and old European buildings, seemed positively sophisticated. Our hotel even displayed polished brass spittoons instead of the enameled ones, shaped like chamber pots, which are seen everywhere else. Muzak was flooding the decks as we cruised up to the Yangtze River; we disembarked to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." The Jiang Jing Club (the French Club before World War II) occupies a whole city block. It is open to foreigners and their guests. Two Japanese students were making use of a newly refurbished bowling alley. A dozen guests in the dining room were entertained by a quartet playing Viennese waltzes. An elderly Chinese couple from Hong Kong were the sole occupants of the fifty-meter indoor swimming pool. Eeriest of all was the empty ballroom with its famous springy dance floor, which can hold hundreds of twirling couples. We sat under an enormous Tiffany lamp and sipped lukewarm drinks. The band was playing tangos and fox-trots. At 10:30 it switched to "Give Me Five Minutes More . . . ," the signal (two generations ago) that the ball was over. We clapped and they said good night. One by one they filed past us, nodding, men in their sixties, each carrying his tea cup and thermos.

TO PROMOTE TOURISM, Peking will invite eight hundred heads of travel organizations from the five continents to visit China next spring. In the major cities, new hotels are rising. The cavernous concrete accommodations from the 1950s, built in the Soviet *moderne* style, are now terribly dilapidated. Windows don't close, ceilings are peeling, toilets leak, and the bathtubs are a dull gray. Air-conditioners turn rooms unbearably cold, and the ubiquitous twenty-five-watt light bulb saves energy by making it impossible to read at night. All hotels are owned by the state; service is surly or delightful, depending on the nature of the employee. The food served to foreigners is superb. Banquets are an occupational hazard that every delegation faces each night: guests are routinely presented with twenty heavenly courses at dinner.

AT MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS like the Great Wall, separate eating and washing facilities are marked "For Foreigners Only." How ironic in a country that fought a revolution to free itself of the foreign concessions and forever eliminate the signs that said "No Chinese Allowed." Anxious to encourage visits from overseas Chinese, the government is renovating old Buddhist temples that were damaged—or at best neglected—since Liberation. In Shandong Province, during the Cultural Revolution, twenty thousand Red Guards destroyed the Temple of the Thousand Buddhas in three hours. It is open again, the thousand broken statues replaced by a few new ones. "The Communist Party envisages freedom of religious belief. One is free to believe as well as not to believe." Some churches have also been restored; Catholics are "free" to follow the teachings of the Church unless they conflict with the doctrine of the Party on such matters as birth control.

MILLIONS OF CHINESE are studying English on the "university on the air." The state-controlled radio and television networks broadcast daily programs for beginners and advanced students. You can learn to sing "Puff the Magic Dragon" or watch a presentation of *Jane Eyre*. Russian has been replaced by English as the government-endorsed second language. It is said that mastering it will "raise the cultural and scientific level of the people." At the universities we met dozens of scholars, some of whom had studied abroad before 1949. Many are burned-out intellectuals who were exiled or arrested for independent thinking. They are followed by the "lost generation"—those between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five—who were barely educated. The hope now lies with the recent crop of graduates. Will they be able to pursue their aims? Item in the *China Daily*: "About one-fifth of this year's 310,000 college graduates will be assigned to organizations under the central government. The rest will go to affiliates of local administrations. . . . With few exceptions graduates set out for their assignments cheerfully. . . . They are important in border and minority nationalities areas. Those assigned to Tibet will not be allowed to apply for reassignment home until they have spent eight years there." Cheerfully?

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL this summer. Beans, eggplants, tomatoes, and watermelons are available on the free market, and in the cities food lines are short. As one travels south along the eastern seaboard, the countryside seems lush. Rice paddies glitter in the sun and plump ducklings float in the canals. Eighty percent of China's workers are engaged in agriculture, yet they cannot feed their country. The population had doubled over three decades—Mao's colossal miscalculation—and belated attempts are now made to limit each couple to one child. Birth control is even the theme of a new opera, "A Harmonious Family." The heroine is an old peasant who is convinced that girls are as valuable as boys, and she encourages her son and her daughter to have one child each. Operas are notoriously romantic. It will take more than a few arias to change the centuries-old habits of China's peasants.

OUR VISIT CAME TO AN END in Hong Kong. Never had that city, the showcase of conspicuous consumption, looked so good. I collapsed in a capitalistic hotel, filled with admiration for the enterprising cousins of the people in the People's Republic. For the sake of our warmhearted hosts and for the other billion-plus Chinese, one hopes that the present course of moderation in Peking will prevail. Let the peasants reap a profit from the family plots. Let the intellectuals bring back the glory that was China.

Nitza Rosovsky

Nitza Rosovsky is the author of *Jerusalem Walks* (Holt, Reinhart & Winston).

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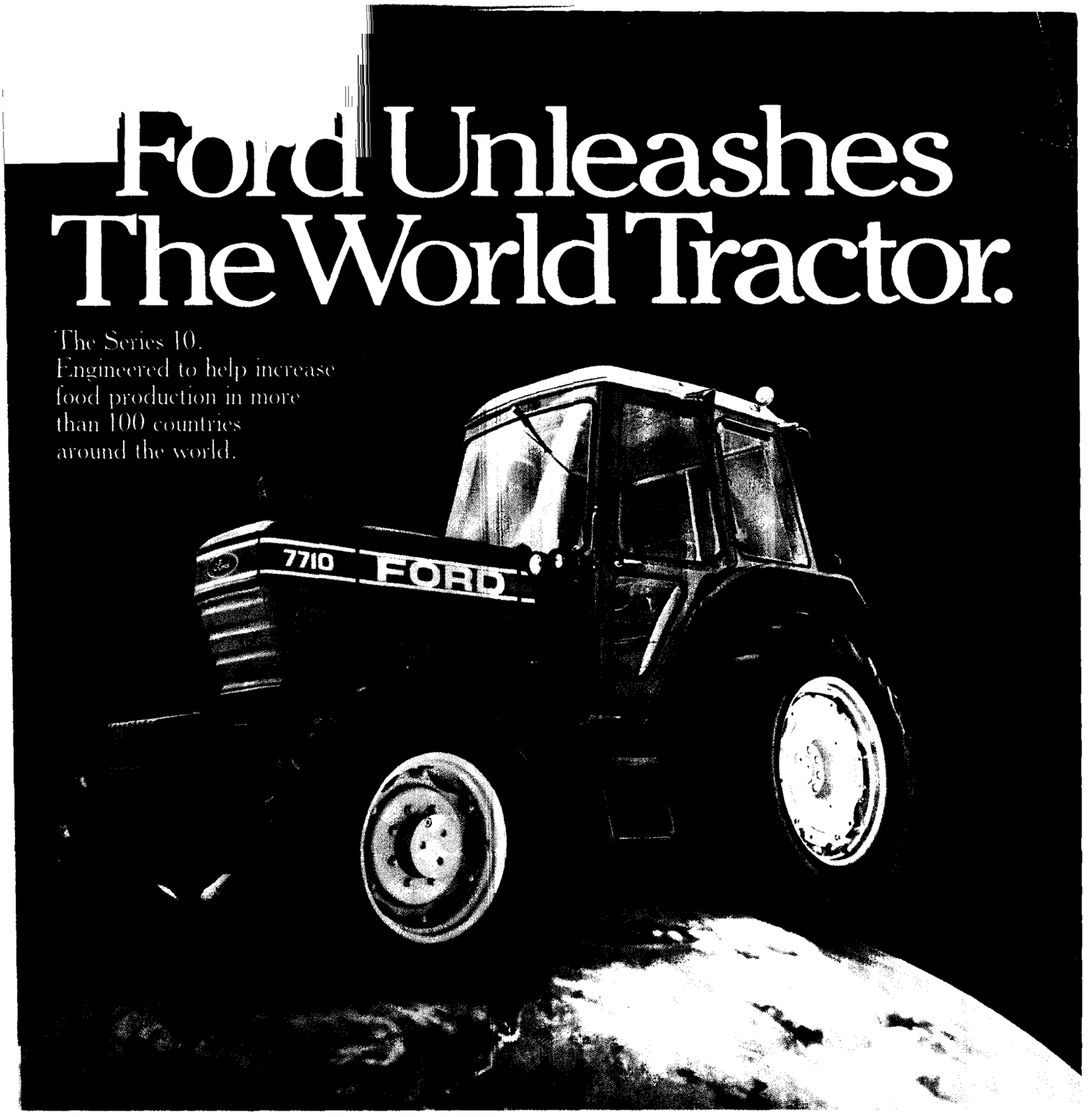

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